

# 2625

**Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy**

Melanie Zimmerman, Executive Secretary

124 Pine St, PO Box 2649.

Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

June 26, 2009

MONTEFIORE



Dear Ms Zimmerman ,

I am writing to encourage the approval of the deregulation of syringes per the regulation to be considered by IRRC at its July 9<sup>th</sup> public meeting. I understand that the Board has now delivered the final version of this regulation to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC), the PA House Professional Licensure Committee and the PA Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee for final review. I commend your actions to date and urge that you take positive actions on this important public health matter .

The legal distribution of clean hypodermic needles and syringes has been proven to reduce transmission of hepatitis C and HIV without increasing drug use. In 2000, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy encouraged all boards of pharmacy to revise laws and regulations to permit the sale and distribution of sterile needles and syringes. Continuing to restrict access to hypodermic needles and syringes could exacerbate the spread of hepatitis C and HIV. Pennsylvania is one of only three states that still prohibit the sale of hypodermic needles and syringes without a prescription. Through 2004, Pennsylvania was the seventh leading state reporting the highest number of cumulative AIDS cases among residents, with 30,174 reported cases.

It is now widely recognized that there is a compelling public health interest in reducing the spread of hepatitis C and HIV. Removing the requirement that hypodermic needles and syringes only be sold with a prescription in Pennsylvania pharmacies will effectuate this interest. To this end, I strongly support the action by the Board to amend the requirement of a prescription by allowing Pennsylvania pharmacies to sell hypodermic needles and syringes without a prescription.

Ernest Drucker, PhD

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