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Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy

Melanie Zimmerman, Executive Secretary

124 Pine St, PO Box 2649

Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

September 20, 2007

Dear Ms. Zimmerman,

I am writing to support The Pennsylvania Pharmacy Boards proposal to eliminate the prescription requirement for injection equipment.

I am Professor of Epidemiology and Social Medicine and Professor of Psychiatry at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, Visiting Professor of Epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and a licensed Clinical Psychologist active in AIDS and addiction research in the US and abroad. I was founding Director (from 1970 to 1990) of a 1000 patient drug treatment program in the Bronx, have been an NIH funded researcher of AIDS and drug addiction since 1990, and am author of over 100 scientific articles and book chapters. I have been Editor in Chief of two international peer review journals : *Addiction Research and Theory* and the open access *Harm Reduction Journal*.

In my own research and that of many others, it is clear that making sterile syringes available without prescriptions will reduce the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV and Hepatitis, among injection drug users and their families. Further, abundant research sponsored by the Federal government has shown that syringe availability does not increase the use of illicit drugs nor lead to more injection among current drug users. It does however lead to the greater likelihood that drug users will access health care and enter drug treatment.

This is an important policy decision and you should be congratulated for supporting it.

Sincerely,

Ernest Drucker

