



For Immediate Release

Contact:

Dr. Susan Bissett, WV DII President
304-941-4182 or 681-205-2287
susan@wvdii.org

**West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute
Releases Harm Reduction Survey Data and Recommendations**

February 22— The West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute (WV DII), Inc. released a report on harm reduction and syringe service programs after conducting a month-long analysis of community opinions and perceptions.

The research was conducted in response to community interest for additional conversation on the topic of harm reduction and needle exchange. Specifically, the WV DII undertook this initiative to:

- Provide interested community citizens an opportunity to express their views on harm reduction;
- Consider those views in the light of national and state scientific research and evidence based practices;
- Provide WV DII’s harm reduction recommendations for moving forward; and
- Share these findings with City and County decision makers.

This report is focused on findings from the Kanawha-Charleston Area. Statewide data is offered as a comparison.

“Harm reduction is important in preventing the spread of infectious disease and promoting public health,” said Dr. Susan Bissett, WV DII President. “However, we know that the success of these programs is largely dependent on community support; which makes understanding community perceptions and attitudes about such programs key to moving our communities forward in addressing substance use disorder.”

The report’s recommendations include:

- Expanding harm reduction/syringe service programs in the Kanawha-Charleston area.
- Developing strategies and mechanisms to address needle litter.
- Launching an educational campaign to address stigma associated with both substance use disorder and harm reduction using a public health perspective.

The report can be accessed at: www.wvdii.org/harmreduction.

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About the WV DII

The West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute (WV DII) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The mission of the WV DII is to reduce deaths in West Virginia from opioid and drug abuse by being (a) an independent advocate for life-enhancing drug policies, and practices, (b) a hub for coordinating drug response activities, and (c) an educational center to address the prevalence of drug abuse and the stigma of drug addiction. The Institute is located in downtown Charleston in West Virginia's state capital and is designed to: identify and assess best practices through research and data analysis, provide education programs on prescription drug safety, collaborate with municipalities and agencies to promote best practices to prevent overdose deaths, advocate for policies that promote educational and employment opportunities for those in recovery, and identify and implement prevention strategies.