

Film Screening and Discussion to Address Problems Related to Injecting Drugs in Public Places and Opportunities for Preventing Overdose Deaths

***Town Hall, lower Level
1119 8th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101
Doors at 6:00, Screening at 7:00***

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Seattle, Washington – The new documentary film *Everywhere But Safe: Public Injecting in New York* will be screened on November 13 at Seattle’s Town Hall. The film documents the health and safety consequences for the thousands of people who inject drugs in public and semi-public places due to homelessness and other factors.

Filmmakers Taeko Frost and Matt Curtis will be present at the screening. It will be followed by a panel discussion with local experts, activists, and drug users to discuss ideas and approaches to harm reduction, including safe consumption/injection spaces, in Seattle.

A Public Health-Seattle & King County syringe exchange survey found that 87% of injectors surveyed in 2013 were interested in a safe injection facility. “In Seattle an average of 2 people per week die from an opiate overdose (heroin/prescription). Heroin users and those dying are increasingly young adults. These same young adults are more likely to share syringes with others. Proven interventions are available to reduce syringe sharing and fatal overdoses”, Caleb Banta-Green, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington. "We can save lives and improve outcomes by treating addiction as a disease and not a crime. It's time to start the conversation about safe-injection and harm reduction here in Seattle." Tim Harris, Founding Director, Real Change.

Supervised injection facilities (SIFs) – which are sometimes called safer injecting sites or drug consumption rooms – were first adopted as a strategy in Switzerland in the 1980s, and quickly spread to other parts of Europe, Canada, and Australia. Today, nearly 100 SIFs exist around the world. Rigorous scientific evaluation has shown them to reduce overdose deaths and infectious disease transmission, improve access to drug treatment and other health care for people who inject drugs, and reduce public disorder, including improperly discarded drug paraphernalia.

SIFs are a part of the larger harm reduction movement, a movement dedicated to range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with various human behaviors, both legal and illegal. "Capitol Hill Community Council is honored to partner with the Public Defender Association and others in raising awareness about harm reduction and safe drug usage," said Jesse Perrin of the Capitol Hill Community Council.

“At the height of the AIDS epidemic in the late 1980s communities and individuals mobilized to establish syringe exchanges as a frontline effort to prevent HIV infection. These, too, were initially controversial, but have since become an essential tool in protecting not just drug user health but community health. We are again facing a public health crisis and safe consumption rooms are just one part of an array of new approaches that could help promote drug user and public health,” Kris Nyrop, LEAD National Support Director at the Public Defender Association.

"Are we serious about using what we have learned from the failures and the human and community damage done by the war on drugs? If so, we have to apply those lessons here and now. Setting policies and designing services that deliberately set out to reduce harm and improve the public's health and individuals' lives allows us to focus on what works." Alison Eisinger, Director of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. "In New York, the documentary Everywhere But Safe has been a tool to educate and engage community members about public injection drug use, including city and state health departments, medical providers, elected officials, family and friends of people who use drugs, and service providers. Seattle is one of the leaders in this country in moving towards sensible drug policy and we're thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of this event to continue that will move the conversation forward," Taeko Frost, Executive Director, Washington Heights CORNER Project.

The event is co-sponsored by the Public Defender Association, VOCAL-WA, ACLU of Washington, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute, University of Washington, Hepatitis Education Project, Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, People's Harm Reduction Alliance, Urban Survivors' Union, Real Change, and the Capitol Hill Community Council. Speaking at the event will be filmmakers **Matt Curtis, MPH** and **Taeko Frost, MPH**, as well **Eric Seitz** a street outreach public health nurse; **Chloe Gale, MSW (REACH)**; **Caleb Banta-Green, PhD** (Senior Research Scientist at the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute as well as an Affiliate Associate Professor at the School of Public Health, University of Washington); **Vivek Chaudhary** (long time officer of the Urban Survivors Union, Seattle's longest standing drug user union); and **Shilo Murphy** (co-founder and executive director of the People's Harm Reduction Alliance). The event is open to the public and panelists will be available to speak to the media both before and after.