Cooker distribution

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICE POLICIES to facilitate use of a sterile cooker for each injection and reduce transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis C (HCV), and other pathogens:

- **Provide individually pre-packaged, sterile cookers with flat bottoms for even heat distribution and heat-resistant handles in the quantities requested by clients with no limit on the number of cookers provided per client, per visit**
- **Offer a sterile cooker with each needle provided**
- **Offer a variety of cookers that meet the needs of clients**
- **Provide pre-packaged safer injection kits (needles/syringes, cookers, filters, ascorbic acid when required, sterile water for injection, alcohol swabs, tourniquets, condoms and lubricant) and also individual safer injection supplies concurrently**
- **Dispose of used cookers and other injection equipment in accordance with local regulations for biomedical waste**
- **Educate clients about the risks associated with sharing and reuse of cookers and the correct single-person use of cookers**
- **Educate clients about the proper disposal of used cookers**
- **Provide multiple, convenient locations for safe disposal of used equipment**

Key messages

Some drugs need to be mixed with water and sometimes an acidifier to make a solution that can be injected. A container – often called a "cooker" because the drug solution may also need to be heated – is needed for this mixing process. Sharing and reusing someone else's cooker can put people at risk for infections such as HIV and HCV. Exact risk of transmission from using a used cooker is not known. People may share cookers more often than needles and other injection equipment, so it is important for needle and syringe programs (NSPs) to educate clients about the potential risks of sharing cookers.

Distributing cookers is an important way for NSPs to reduce the risks associated with sharing or reusing cookers. While cookers are becoming available from a growing number of NSPs in Canada, availability of cookers may not be the same across the provinces/territories. Distributing 1000 cookers per person per year would match coverage suggestions that have been made for needles.

transmission of HIV, HCV, and other viruses or bacteria. This reinforces the importance of using a new needle for every injection. Therefore 100% or greater needle coverage is an important goal.