

Brazil Earmarks US\$ 420,000 for Drug Users' Syringe Exchange

Contributed by Irene Lôbo
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This week, Brazil's Ministry of Health released norms on what is known as harm reduction for drug users.

The measures seek to reduce damage to drug users who, by sharing syringes, needles and pipes, are in danger of getting diseases such as AIDS and hepatitis.

"Brazil has had a syringe and needle exchange program for a decade. During that time we have reduced cases of AIDS and hepatitis C by more than half," explained Pedro Gabriel Delgado, of the Ministry of Health's mental health program.

Delgado says that the government intends to set up more harm reduction programs and has earmarked US\$ 420,000 (1.6 million) for them.

The backbone of the government's harm reduction to drug user program are the CapsAD - Centers for Psycho-Social Attention. There are 115 CapsAD in operation in 20 municipalities around the country.

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