



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 9, 2018

## NYC Mayor Proposes Supervised Drug Injection Sites Throughout City

New York City will be opening four supervised injection sites for illegal drug users to use drugs without fear of arrest, announced Mayor Bill de Blasio. The centers will be equipped with medical professionals to prevent fatal overdoses, the *Daily Wire* reports.

“The opioid epidemic has killed more people in our city than car crashes and homicides combined,” de Blasio [said](#) in a statement released last Thursday. “After a rigorous review of similar efforts across the world, and after careful consideration of public health and safety experts, we believe overdose prevention centers will save lives and get more New Yorkers into the treatment they need to beat this deadly addiction.”



The proposed sites would provide sterile injection supplies, while professionals would advise users on safer injection practices and monitor their reactions to the drugs. In the event of an overdose, the medical professionals would administer medications. Additionally, users who visit the injection sites would be provided access to social services such as drug-rehabilitation programs.

Supporters of the sites claim they would help to reduce drug fatalities and the risks of infectious disease transmission in New York City, where there have been nearly 3,000 overdose deaths over the last two years.

“We lose people in their homes, in their basements, in the bathroom of a McDonalds or a Starbucks alone with no help,” de Blasio told WNYC Radio. “That can’t go on. Overdose prevention centers give us a chance to actually change that.”

De Blasio has proposed four injection sites in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx. The sites would be financed and operated by authorized nonprofit groups, which have not yet been publicly identified, according to the *Daily Wire*.

According to the *New York Times*, the sites would open after a six- to 12-month period of “outreach to the communities where they will be located.”

De Blasio has numerous obstacles to cross in order to establish the sites. The State Department of Health would need to approve them, and it is not likely to do so as long as Governor Andrew Cuomo is up for re-election the remainder of this year.

Likewise, federal agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have already voiced opposition to drug injection sites and could intervene.



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“Supervised injection facilities, or so-called safe injection sites, violate federal law,” DEA spokesperson Katherine Pfaff [told](#) BuzzFeed News in February. “Any facilitation of illicit drug use is considered in violation of the Controlled Substances Act and, therefore, subject to legal action.”

Some New York City residents have already raised concerns about the possibility of such facilities being set up in their own communities, notes Representative Dan Donovan (R-N.Y.), who referred to de Blasio’s proposal as “liberal insanity.”

A mother from Park Slope in Brooklyn, where one of the injection sites could be located, told the *New York Post*, “It’s not a good idea at all. We have kids to raise.”

A Washington Heights resident was infuriated to learn that her neighborhood was the proposed site of the Manhattan injection facility. “I have two young children I already walk a block out of the way just so my kids don’t have to see that when we go by,” she said. “I understand that people should be safe and need better care. [But] this neighborhood has suffered enough.”

The *New York Times* observes that no such facilities exist in the United States at the moment, but officials in Seattle, San Francisco, and Philadelphia have been making pushes to implement policies similar to those proposed by Mayor de Blasio. Outside of the United States, however, there are 100 operational injection sites in places such as Germany, Spain, Australia, and Canada.

New York City is not the only city in the state to consider heroin injection facilities. In 2016, Svante Myrick, mayor of Ithaca, proposed a plan for a supervised drug facility in which heroin users could safely use without fear of arrest. Discussions on that proposal remain underway.

WGRZ reports that a coalition called “End Overdose NY” is currently lobbying for a bill in the New York Assembly to authorize safe injection sites to legally operate through the state of New York. Sites would have sterile needles available, staff with the drug ‘Narcan’ readily on-hand in case of overdose, and reading materials about drug addiction and information on help to quit.

According to the *Daily Wire*, the push to set up injection sites in New York began at a town hall meeting hosted by George Soros’ Open Society Foundation (OSF) in 2015. The charge has been led by the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), which was awarded a \$50 million grant from the OSF in 2012 to “advance drug policy reform.”

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