

D.A., ex-TL police captain support safe-injection site

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

behavior that impacts the community and the user," Gascon wrote in an email to The Extra. "I support the identification of appropriate sites for the safety of the user and the community in which they reside."

Safe, or supervised, injection sites are rooms where users inject their illegal drugs under medical supervision with counseling and rehabilitation services available. Results have been good, but the approach remains controversial with most critics against having the site, and user traffic, in their backyard.

Establishing injection sites was recommended in February by the San Francisco Hepatitis C Task Force in a report citing studies that show the sites help curtail the spread of hep C, HIV and death from overdosing. Also in support are the groups in the Alliance to Save Lives: Drug Policy Alliance, Harm Reduction Coalition, Hospitality House, AIDS Foundation, Mission Neighborhood Resource, San Francisco Drug Users Union and the Harvey Milk Club.

The idea got a boost when District 6 supervisorial candidate Glendon Hyde made the cause a major point of his campaign.

"The sites were extremely well received by the District 6 community," Hyde, who represents the Harvey Milk Club with the alliance, said in an interview. "It was a solution offering dignity, not a punishing solution."

The sites opened in Europe in the 1970s. The alliance notes there are 27 cities in other countries with facilities, including in Sydney, Australia, and Oslo, Norway. But prime data come

from North America's only facility, Insite, established September 2003 in Vancouver, B.C., which has 12,000 registered users. During 2010, users injected their own illegal drugs nearly 600 times a day under nurses' supervision.

There were 221 overdose interventions with no fatalities. Counselors made 458 admissions into Onsite, the adjacent detox treatment facility, and 43% completed the program. Overdose deaths within a third of a mile radius were reduced more than a third after Insite was established; the rest of Vancouver saw a 9% drop.

The supervision reduced HIV infections, increased the use of services and reduced "public disorder caused by injection use in public spaces." Moreover, Insite, with a \$3 million budget for 2010, has been "cost effective," according to a study by a panel of experts in the field.

In a similar vein, state Sen. Leland Yee's SB41 would allow adults to buy syringes in pharmacies without a prescription. Research in support of Yee's legislation brought out that the World Health Organization concluded in 2008: "Overwhelming scientific consensus showed improved syringe access reduced rates of HIV and hepatitis without contributing to drug use, crime or unsafe discard of syringes." Research also showed the average cost of treating hepatitis C is about \$100,000, or \$300,000 if a liver transplant is required. The estimated lifetime cost of treating an HIV/AIDS patient is \$600,000.

"Based on a robust body of research, it is clear that Sen. Yee's bill will save thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars by

preventing HIV and hepatitis," Thomas said of the bill that has passed both houses but needs a second Senate vote before going to the governor.

A public conversation about safe-injection sites arose in San Francisco in 2007. The Department of Public Health sponsored a symposium at the Women's Building, featuring speakers from Insite. That October, at a Friends of Boeddeker Park meeting, Tenderloin police Capt. Jimenez stunned everyone by suggesting the northeast corner of the park might be converted into a supervised, safe-injection site. But it didn't resonate, so he dropped it.

The next year, a team pushing safe injection sites made the rounds of community organizations to air the topic, hoping for support. Conard House Supportive Housing Director Seth Katzman and a Dope Project spokeswoman touted the need for a site, suggesting locating it in the

Tenderloin or the Mission, because that's where most IV addicts are. Katzman told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative that it would reduce needles and pass-outs on the street and cut the spread of disease and overdose deaths while offering addicts services. He got no support. The prevailing sentiment was: Not in my backyard.

One man said it would be like a billboard advertising addicts to come to the Tenderloin. Another suggested a safe haven would be like "World War III." But Katzman said the war was already raging and that a measure of safety could be introduced to benefit the community.

The city wasn't responding then, either. Mayor Newsom, after first supporting the idea, backed off from leading the charge.

"There was no action by the city,"

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

CENTRAL CITY



NEWS IS A

COMMUNITY SERVICE

CENTRAL CITY EXTRA is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94103.

PHONE: (415) 626-1650
FAX: (415) 626-7276
EMAIL: centralcityextra@studycenter.org

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Geoffrey Link
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Heidi Swillinger
SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR: Marjorie Beggs
COMMUNITY REPORTER: Tom Carter
REPORTERS: Ed Bowers, Jonathan Newman, Mark Hedin, Anne Marie Jordan

DESIGNER: Lenny Limjoco
PHOTOGRAPHER: Lenny Limjoco
CONTRIBUTORS: John Burks, Diamond Dave, Brian Rinker
DESIGN CONSULTANT: Don McCartney
DISTRIBUTION: Mark Hedin
EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: David Baker, Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg, Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

Central City Extra is a member of the SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION, SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AND SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA PRESS CLUB

Manor Advocates

Endorse





Your vote counts on November 8th

Remember to vote for leaders who support renters rights.





Ranked choice endorsements from Manor Advocates

Rank choice endorsements

Mayor Candidate	District Attorney	Sheriff
John Avalos	Maurice Chenier	David Wong
1st choice	1st choice	1st choice
Leland Yee	David Onek	Ross Mirkarimi
2nd choice	2nd choice	2nd choice
Cesar Ascarrunz	Sharmin Bock	Paul Miyamoto
3rd choice	3rd choice	3rd choice

This endorsement slate is by Tenant / Civic Leaders who have resided in District 6 neighborhoods for over fifteen years and engaged in preserving affordable housing. Each of us won many victories on behalf of our community. When hearing about other endorsements ask yourself if these people even support the most basic need we all share, which is decent housing for everyone.

Your vote counts on Nov. 8, 2011

This is a paid advertisement not affiliated with any candidate campaign. Paid for by Manor Advocates (advocating since 1997) October 24, 2011 last day to register to vote in this election.

Faithful Fools Street Zendo

Weekly Meditation



All forms of meditation are welcome and encouraged. This is a place where people come together to practice meditation in an atmosphere of quiet support.

Meditation Schedule

Zen Lineage

Monday	9:00am – 10:00am
Tuesday	9:00am – 10:00am & 6:15pm – 6:45pm
Thursday	9:00am – 10:00am
Friday	9:00am – 10:30am
Nichiren Shu Lineage	
Sunday	3:00pm – 5:00pm

For other weekly and monthly events such as Street Retreats, Bible Study, Creative Writing and Movie Nights check out our website!

www.faithfulfools.org 234 Hyde Street (415) 474-0508