

OBJECTIVE

Improve patient, staff, and community safety by providing a safe and accessible way to dispose of used sharps. The Public Sharps Disposal Program at Clarinda Regional Health Center helps reduce needlestick injuries, prevent bloodborne pathogen exposure, encourage proper sharps disposal, and promote community education on safe sharps handling practices.

BACKGROUND

Patient safety and prevention of needlestick injuries/exposures are top priorities at Clarinda Regional Health Center (CRHC), as sharps-related injuries pose serious risks that can lead to bloodborne pathogen exposure, additional injuries, and increased healthcare costs. Community members managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, autoimmune diseases, infertility treatments, or other injectable therapies may not have access to safe disposal resources.

CRHC identified the need for a community-based sharps disposal option to help reduce unsafe disposal practices and support public health initiatives. Before the implementation of the revised process, CRHC experienced three incidents involving unapproved sharps containers being dropped off at the facility, and one container that potentially contained illegal substances. These incidents identified the need for a more formalized, secure, and monitored disposal process.



PUBLIC SHARPS DISPOSAL: *From Risk to Prevention*

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METRICS:

There are currently no metrics available for comparison, as sharps disposal was not formally tracked before the implementation of the revised process and installation of the locked biohazard disposal bin.

Future metrics may include:

- ◀ Pounds of sharps waste diverted from landfills
- ◀ Number of sharps containers sold or exchanged
- ◀ Number of patients or community members utilizing the program
- ◀ Frequency of disposal bin replacement
- ◀ Number of unapproved sharps disposal incidents reported

Data collected through these metrics may assist CRHC in evaluating program utilization, monitoring compliance, and identifying community trends related to sharps disposal practices in the future.



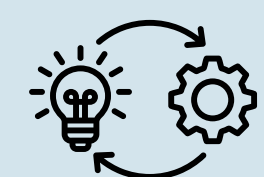
ANALYSIS

The Public Sharps Disposal Program has supported CRHC's commitment to community safety and infection prevention by providing a reliable disposal option for community-generated sharps waste. Increased awareness and accessibility to proper disposal resources may contribute to reductions in unsafe sharps disposal practices and decrease the potential for accidental sharps exposures.

CRHC does not have historical comparison data available, as utilization and disposal practices were not formally tracked before the implementation of the locked biohazard disposal bin. Although the program is not widely advertised throughout the facility, educational flyers are currently being distributed to newly diagnosed diabetic patients and made available near the sharps disposal bin.

Since the implementation of the revised process on March 3, 2026, a total of 35 pounds of sharps waste have been collected through the disposal program. The initial collection totaled 18 pounds and was emptied on May 1, 2026. An additional 17 pounds of sharps waste were collected and emptied on May 21, 2026. These findings demonstrate active community utilization of the program and support the need for continued education and accessibility regarding safe sharps disposal practices.

ACTIONS TAKEN



PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

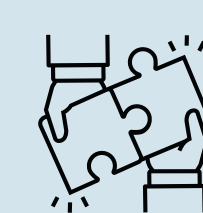
Clarinda Regional Health Center revised the Public Sharps Disposal Program to improve safety, accessibility, and community awareness regarding proper sharps disposal practices. A large, locked biohazard sharps disposal bin was installed in a convenient, monitored location accessible to patients and community members. The updated process officially launched on March 3, 2026.



STAFF EDUCATION

Staff education was completed in February 2026 through in-person training and organizational education platforms to ensure a consistent understanding of the updated process. Topics included:

- Approved disposal location and drop-off times
- Proper sharps disposal procedures
- Approved puncture-resistant sharps containers
- Prohibited containers and loose sharps disposal
- Steps for handling unapproved containers
- Community resources for purchasing sharps containers



COLLABORATION & AWARENESS

Additional education was provided to Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) members in March 2026. PFAC feedback identified the need for increased community awareness regarding safe sharps disposal resources.

Infection Prevention, EVIP, & Marketing collaborated to develop materials to educate patients & community members focused on:

- Proper sharps handling
- Safe disposal practices
- Available CRHC disposal resources



ONGOING MONITORING

Weekly audits are conducted by CRHC's Environmental Infection Prevention (EVIP) department to:

- Monitor appropriate disposal bin usage
- Ensure safe sharps management
- Identify when bin replacement is needed

This process supports ongoing quality improvement in our facility, minimizes infection prevention fallouts, and overall community safety efforts.

NEXT STEPS

- ◀ CRHC will continue tracking how the sharps disposal program is being used and monitor safety outcomes.
- ◀ Patients using injectable medications or sharps will continue receiving education on safe disposal practices.

CRHC plans to work with:

- Pharmacies & Public health departments
- Other local businesses using sharps

- ◀ These partnerships will help provide consistent community education and resources for safe sharps disposal.
- ◀ Infection Prevention and Safety teams will continue working with departments to:
 - Maintain program effectiveness
 - Educate staff
 - Ensure safe sharps waste handling
- ◀ The program will be regularly reviewed through quality, safety, and infection prevention processes.
- ◀ Reviews will help:
 - Identify areas for improvement
 - Increase community awareness
 - Support patient and community safety

Thank you to Partners in Exceptional Care, who purchased the sharps disposal bin in support of CRHC's mission to improve community safety.

