SUPPORT THE MIAMI-DADE INFECTIOUS DISEASE ELIMINATION ACT (I.D.E.A.)

- This bill authorizes the University of Miami and its affiliates to establish a 5-year pilot program to offer free, clean, and unused needles and syringes in exchange for used needles and syringes as a means to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases among intravenous drug users. 30 states have a legal syringe exchange program (SEP) where injection drug users safely use syringes for clean ones.

- Stipulates that NO STATE FUNDS shall be used for the exchange program. Funding MUST come from private sources of grants/donations.

- This bill sets the requirements under which the pilot program must operate to include:
  - The pilot program may operate at a fixed location or mobile health unit, with maximum security of the site and equipment.
  - An accounting of needles and syringes distributed and in storage.
  - Safety measures for safe disposal of returned needles/syringes.
  - A 1-to-1 exchange ratio of used needles/syringes for sterile needles/syringes.
  - Requires the program to make available to program participants educational materials; HIV and viral hepatitis counseling and testing services; referral services to provide education regarding HIV, AIDS and viral hepatitis transmission; and drug-abuse prevention and treatment counseling and referral services.

- Florida is now the state, and Miami is the city, with the highest rate of new HIV infections in the country.

- Miami-Dade County has over 10,000 injection drug users and more than one in five is HIV positive, the highest of any U.S. city. At least one-third has hepatitis C.

- According to DOH, in 2013 there was a 25% increase in the # of newly diagnosed cases of HIV among IDUs (336 in 2013, compared to 267 cases in 2012). This represents almost 1 new case of HIV diagnosed per day over the course of a year in FL.

- Since legalizing syringe exchange programs in New York State in 1992, there has been a 49% reduction in the newly diagnosed cases of HIV among IDUs. A five-year pilot program in Washington, D.C., showed an 80% reduction in newly diagnosed cases.

- SEPs do NOT encourage the initiation of drug use nor do they increase the frequency of drug use among current users. In one study, employment increased 44.8 percent within six months among clients of SEPs.

- Research shows that SEPs protect law enforcement personnel, first responders and waste collectors from needle stick injuries. A Connecticut study found that needle stick injuries among police officers were reduced by two-thirds after implementing SEPs.

- The cost of a sterile syringe can be as little as 97 cents. The estimated lifetime cost of treating an HIV positive person is between $385,200 and $618,900. It is estimated that if 10% of new cases of HIV in injection drug users in Miami-Dade had been prevented, that would represent a savings $124 million in HIV treatment costs to Florida.

- In a recent study, doctors at the University of Miami and Jackson Memorial Hospital found that over one year, cases of infections at Jackson Memorial caused by injection drug use led to costs of $11.4 million and 17 deaths, 92% of which was paid by taxpayers.

- Supported by over 20 organizations including: Florida Medical Association, University of Miami; Baptist Health; The AIDS Institute; Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association; Florida Hospital Association; Florida Osteopathic Medical Association; Florida Chapter, American College of Physicians; Florida Academy of Family Physicians; Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; etc.