

Avoid the Scratcher

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department (NKIDHD) has approximately twenty permitted tattoo and body piercing studios within Boone, Kenton, Campbell, and Grant counties. This number will certainly grow as questions about the process and requirements needed for a new studio are common. Demand for such studios has increased as tattoos and piercings have become more culturally accepted. The nature of body art lends itself to the possible exposure of bloodborne pathogens. Currently, the tattoo and body piercing programs lack educational requirements for artists regarding the understanding and application in the precautions, the risks, and types of infectious diseases. Upon successful completion, this project will serve as the framework for a local regulation requiring bloodborne pathogen education within NKIDHD's jurisdiction.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

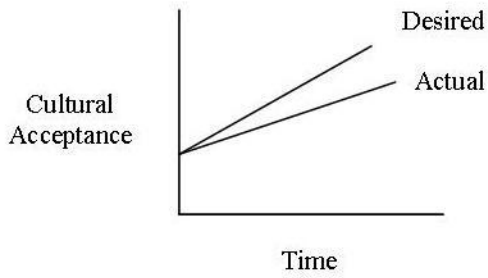
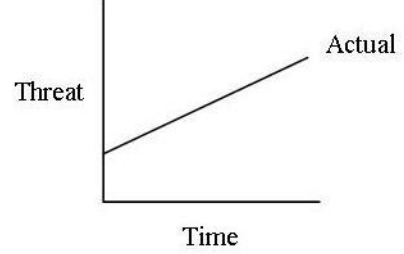
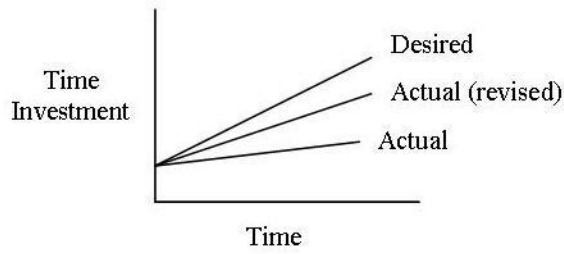
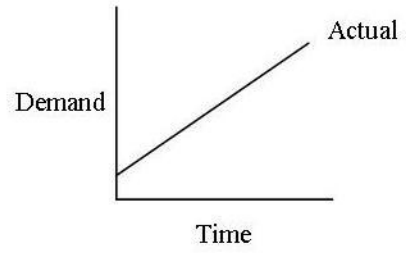
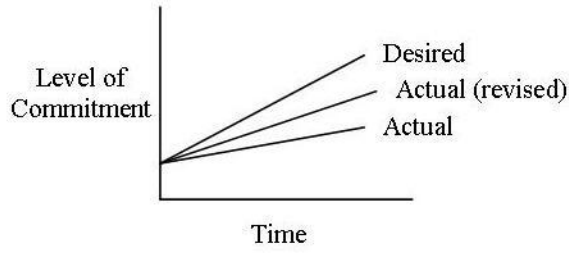
The Kentucky Department for Public Health developed the statewide tattoo and body piercing policies and assists local health departments execute the program objectives. Regulations regarding the cleanliness of a studio, sterilization of instruments, procedures to prevent the spread of disease, and policies to prevent tattooing and piercing of minors without written notarized consent are currently in place. While the current regulation details specific fixture and procedural requirements, bloodborne pathogen and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) education along with the importance of protecting the artist and client from such hazards are not specifically addressed. The purpose of this proposed regulation, permissible by KRS 212.230, is to require an educational process for artists and owners of tattoo and body piercing studios with the underlying purpose of preventing disease and protecting public health.

Problem Statement:

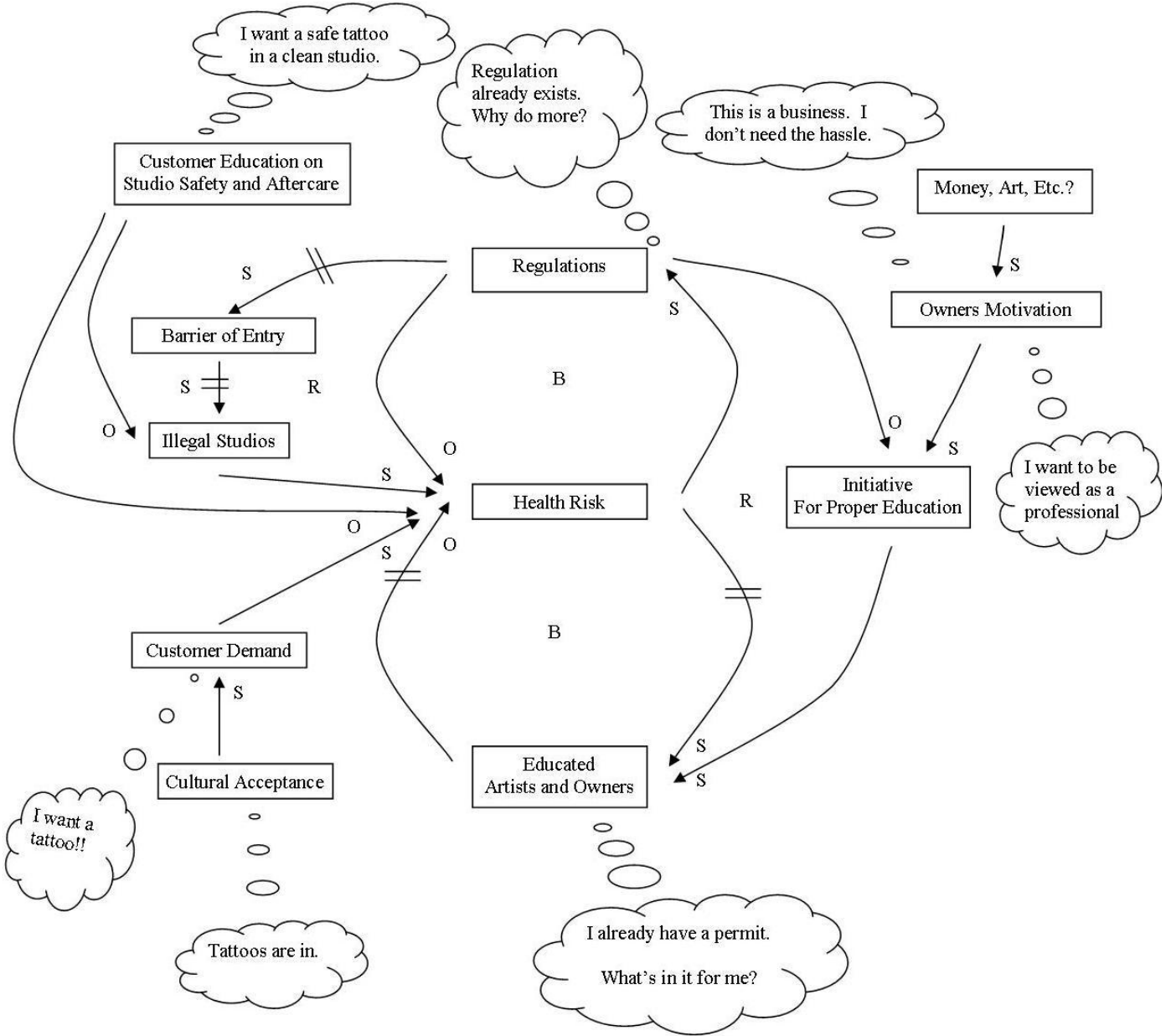
While surrounding states are tightening their standards, why does Kentucky's Tattoo and Body Piercing program remain stagnant as customer demand, risk, and studios' desired level of professionalism have increased?

Behavior Over Time Graph:

Key Variables



Causal Loop Diagram:



10 Essential Public Health Services/National Goals Supported:

Essential Public Health Service #3

Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.

Individuals receiving tattoos or body piercings have an increased risk of contracting bloodborne pathogens. Permitted studios with educated artists should be chosen to reduce the exposure to infectious material. Artist will gain the knowledge necessary to protect not only their clients, but themselves.

Essential Public Health Service #5

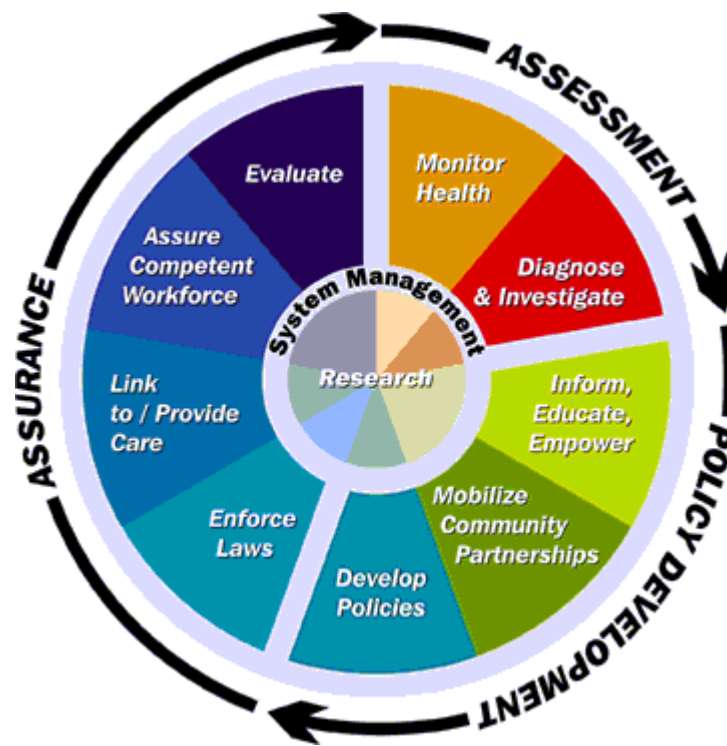
Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

Aftercare will include information regarding MRSA infections. Clients will be informed on ways to prevent infections during the healing process. Standards for tattooing/body piercing studios operating in our community will be raised.

Essential Service #6

Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.

Implementation of a regulation requiring bloodborne pathogen education ensures a reduced risk of exposure during procedures.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION/DELIVERABLES:

- Development and passage of a local regulation pursuant to KRS 211.760 including definitions, establishing requirements and fees, rules for administration and enforcement, penalty for violations, issuance of certificates, renewal of certification, terms, and possible exemptions
- Provide educational materials to clients regarding MRSA and other possible infections
- Acknowledge studio compliance and partnership via health department website, signage, placards, etc.
- Likelihood of illegal studios will decrease as potential clients gravitate toward licensed studios
- Success will be measured by passing local regulation, providing educational information, studios to be staffed with certified, educated artists, and owners

METHODOLOGY:

By using the causal loop diagram, key stakeholders were identified. Studio owners were contacted to discuss and verify the need for bloodborne pathogen education and the receptiveness of industry for this mandate. Information concerning the professional organization, Alliance of Professional Tattooist, which was formed to promote education, health and safety as it concerns the tattoo industry was received.¹ Maintaining support for this project was important as buy-in would be essential to move forward.

Previously written local regulation mandating educational requirements for food managers was used as a template for the Tattoo Artist / Body Piercer Bloodborne Pathogen Education Certification. Options regarding the renewal process were evaluated and upon reviewing OSHA requirements, annual refreshers would align closely with federal standards.² Updates on our website identifying studios located within our district with bloodborne pathogen education was considered along with placards to be placed in studios. This would give extra recognition to compliant studios and help educate potential clients.

Community-Acquired MRSA outbreaks among tattoo recipients were identified by hospital infection-control practitioners and reported to local health departments in six separate communities in Ohio, Kentucky, and Vermont during June 2004.³ Tattoo artists and piercers are required to give aftercare instructions to clients, including cleaning and bandaging techniques. However with CA-MRSA increasing, a key component of client education is missing. Developing MRSA pamphlets for artists to distribute to clients were discussed at length.

RESULTS:

Regulation regarding the certification process was developed – see attachment A. Work continues with the Environmental Director and The District Board of Health for final approval. Feedback is positive and passage by late spring, early summer 2010 is likely. Additionally, MRSA pamphlets and options to inform the public of studio compliance and partnership of this public health initiative are being considered.

CONCLUSIONS:

Body art can be considered risky behavior. Tattoo artists, body piercing artists, and clients are potentially exposed to infectious materials. This KPHLI project evaluated the need and feasibility of passing a local regulation within NKIDHD's jurisdiction requiring artists to obtain bloodborne pathogen education. Furthermore, client aftercare sheets regarding possible side effects and infections were examined and the need to supplement such information was identified. We anticipate the knowledge gained by such requirements will reduce exposure to bloodborne pathogens and infections.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Laura Strevels

During this past year the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute has given me the tools to successfully reach both professional and personal goals. Valuable reasoning tools, such as systems thinking has taught me to work fast-paced in a team setting to produce a written product within a year's time. The speakers and the topics presented at each summit were beneficial in my growth as a leader in my organization. By reviewing the instruments such as 360° and BarOn EQI, I determined my strengths as well as areas in need of improvement. My individual development plan allowed me to expand on my goals and taught me to become an active, empathic listener. I have enjoyed this experience and the lessons learned.

Ted Talley

I anticipate the added education and training Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute provides will allow me to embrace a changing environment and succeed in enhancing community health efforts by improving program accountability and quality while properly evaluating effectiveness and accessibility. We must be able to prioritize community health needs, properly identify resources needed to address these needs, and develop sound public health policies. I believe KPHLI has benefited me by growing my capacity to accurately identify and analyze the challenges faced in today's public health environment.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Alliance for Professional Tattooist, www.safe-tattoos.com
- ² Occupational Safety and Health Association, www.osha.gov
- ³ CDC, MMWR weekly, June 23, 2006 / 55(24);677-679

Appendix A

Tattoo Artist/Body Piercer Bloodborne Pathogen Education Certification

Regulation of the Northern Kentucky District Board of Health Pursuant to KRS 212.230 (1) (c)

A regulation of the Northern Kentucky District Board of Health including definitions, requiring tattoo artist/body piercer bloodborne pathogen education certification within the district; Establishing requirements for certification; Establishing the term of certification; Providing for renewal of certification; Establishing Requirements for proof of certification; Providing for penalty for violation, and severability.

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to require the certification of tattoo artist/body piercer operating within the Northern Kentucky Independent Health District (NKIDHD) jurisdiction; so that personnel shall have knowledge of the risk of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials with the underlying purpose of preventing bloodborne disease transmission and protecting the public health.

Section 2. Rules for Administration and Enforcement

The District Director of Health of the NKIDHD or his/her designee is responsible for the enforcement of this regulation. The NKIDHD is hereby authorized to make and adopt such rules as deemed necessary for the administration and enforcement of this regulation and which rules shall not be in conflict with or an enlargement of any of the provisions of this regulation.

Section 3. Definitions

For the purpose of this regulation:

(a). “Tattoo Artist” means an individual registered by the NKIDHD who engages in the act of tattooing.

(b). “Body Piercer” means an individual registered by the NKIDHD who engages in the act of body piercing.

(c). “NKIDHD” means the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department Health Director or his/her designee having jurisdiction over tattoo/body piercing facility.

(d). “Tattoo/body piercing facility” means the place of business where tattooing, body piercing, or both are conducted.

(e). “Bloodborne pathogen(s)” means the pathogenic microorganisms that are present in the human blood that can cause disease in humans such as, but not exclusive of, Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

(f). “Blood” means human blood or any human body fluid or tissue that is visibly contaminated with blood.

(g). “Contaminated waste” means any material to be disposed of that has been soiled by blood or other potentially infectious material in the process of tattooing and/or body piercing.

Section 4. Tattoo Artist/Body Piercer Bloodborne Pathogen Education Certification Required

(a). After 90 days of the adoption of this regulation no tattoo artist/body piercer shall engage in the act of tattooing and/or body piercing unless that person holds a valid bloodborne pathogen education certification.

(b). In order to obtain a tattoo artist/body piercer bloodborne pathogen education certification, applicants for certification must provide the NKIDHD with documentation that verifies their knowledge of the risk of exposure to blood or other potentially contaminated waste and the prevention of bloodborne disease transmission. Satisfactory documentation will consist of bloodborne pathogen training approved by NKIDHD, such as bloodborne pathogen training in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards 29 CFR 1910.1030. Such certification shall verify the applicant has achieved a passing score on an examination, which has been designed to measure the understanding and application in the precautions, the risks, and types of infectious diseases contracted through exposure, the proper safeguards to prevent exposure, and proper methods of handling other potentially infectious materials.

Section 5. Renewal of Certification

A holder of a tattoo artist/body piercer bloodborne pathogen education certification shall renew their certificate per NKIDHD administrative policy.

Section 6. Proof of Certification

Each certified tattoo artist/body piercer shall display his/hers certificate in a prominent location in the facility.

Section 7. Certificate Not Transferable

A tattoo artist/body piercer bloodborne pathogen education certificate is not transferable from one person to another.

Section 8. Penalty for Violation

Any tattoo artist or body piercer found in violation of this article shall be ordered to comply with this regulation. If any tattoo artist or body piercer does not comply with the order of the NKIDHD, then pursuant to KRS 212.715 and KRS 212.990 (2), the tattoo artist or body piercer shall be subject to a fine not less than \$10.00 nor more than \$100.00 for each day that the order of the NKIDHD is not complied with. NKIDHD may ask for court cost and legal fee reimbursement.

Section 9. Severability

If any section, sub-section, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this regulation is, for any reason, held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this regulation.

