



SECURE MEDICINE RETURN FOR WASHINGTON

The Problem:

Unwanted Medicines in Our Homes Increase Risks of Poisoning, Abuse, and Improper Disposal

Medicines save lives and treat illnesses. But expired or left-over drugs need to be handled safely and disposed of properly to prevent harm to people and our environment.

Drugs that accumulate in our medicine cabinets can contribute to accidental poisonings and illegitimate access that can lead to abuse. Some of the unwanted medicine that is flushed down toilets or thrown in the trash will end up in our surface or ground waters, potentially impacting aquatic organisms.

Demand for a safe way to dispose of medicines is high. A pilot program to take back unwanted medicines in Washington at Group Health Cooperative and select Bartell Drugs locations has collected more than 15,000 pounds of unwanted medicines in their original containers since October 2006, with limited locations and little advertising. *For more information, see www.medicinereturn.com.*

The Solution: A Secure Medicine Return Program for Washington

The Secure Medicine Return Bill will create a producer-provided medicine return program that is convenient, safe and secure for residents throughout the state. Prescription and over-the-counter medicines will be collected and disposed using the safest technology currently available to help prevent poisonings, misuse, and environmental contamination.

The bill sets up a shared responsibility approach:

- **Producer-Provided Program:** The bill sets minimum program requirements, but does not mandate specific collection methods. Producers of prescription and over-the-counter medications will have the flexibility to use their expertise to create the best and most cost-effective program. Producers may work together to create a program or may create a program on their own. Drug producers will pay for collection, transportation and disposal. Manufacturers of medicines have more than ten years of experience providing and paying for a medicine return program in British Columbia and are operating similar programs in other countries, including Italy, Spain, and France.
- **State Government Oversight:** Washington's Board of Pharmacy will review, approve, and monitor the take-back program. Agency staffing for the program will be minimal, but will provide essential oversight.
- **Voluntary Retailer Involvement:** If medicine producers want to offer collection sites in pharmacies, retailers can choose to participate or not. However, results of the pilot project here in Washington and similar programs in British Columbia and Europe, suggest many retail pharmacies will want to voluntarily assist with this customer service.

About Costs of a Medicine Return Program:

The Secure Medicine Return Bill will not require any money from the state general fund. Medicine producers will fund all costs of the medicine return program, with no charge to consumers when returning medicines and no new costs to local governments. All costs for Washington State agencies to provide rulemaking, oversight and enforcement will be fully recovered through a fee paid by manufacturers. Overall costs of a medicine return program will depend on the type of program the drug producers choose to set up and their contract arrangements. Costs are expected to be relatively small compared to the \$3.1 billion in annual sales of prescription and over-the-counter medicines in Washington State. If the estimated cost of a medicine return program is spread over all the prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines sold in Washington State, it would only cost from one to two pennies per container of medicine sold.



Supporters of the Secure Medicine Return Bill



BUSINESSES & ASSOCIATIONS

Bartell Drugs
Jim's Pharmacy, Sequim
Washington State Recycling Association

HEALTH & MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Academy of Pediatrics - Washington
State Chapter
Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses
Breast Cancer Fund
Children's Alliance
Home Care Association of Washington
Institute for Children's Environmental Health
Institute for Neurotoxicology & Neurological
Disorders
School Nurse Organization of Washington
Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA)
Foundation
Washington Poison Center
Washington State Hospice & Palliative Care
Organization
Washington State Medical Association
Washington State Nurses Association
Washington State Psychological Association

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs

CIVIC & FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

Earth Ministry
League of Women Voters of Washington
Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State
Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby
WashPIRG

ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Rivers
Environment Washington
National Wildlife Federation
People For Puget Sound
Sierra Club Cascade Chapter
Surfrider Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation
Washington Environmental Council
Washington Toxics Coalition

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & ASSOCIATIONS

City of Seattle
Clark County
Coalition for Clean Water
King County
Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King
County
Public Health – Seattle & King County
Snohomish County
Washington State Association of Counties

Last updated January 15, 2009

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- January 2009 -

