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Michigan Non-Profit Having an Impact on
Pharmaceutical Disposal Legislation for Pharmacies-Receives Award

Michigan Public Act 24 of 2014 was signed by Governor Rick Snyder on March 4, 2014 and takes immediate effect making it easier for pharmacies in Michigan to act as collection points for pharmaceuticals. The legislation, HB 5005 sponsored by State Representative Andrea Lafontaine has been in development since 2009. Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) the state regulatory agency began looking at the issue of collection of drugs at pharmacies due in large part to the growth of the Yellow Jug Old Drugs program operated by Great Lakes Clean Water Organization www.greatlakeslcleanwater.org
Link to Governor Snyder Legislation page
https://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577_57657-323107--,00.html

The Great Lakes Clean Water Organization (GLCW was founded in 2008. Their mission is: To promote the collection and disposal of unused/unwanted drugs in a safe and approved manner. This will keep harmful effects of drugs out of ground water, surface water and municipal water systems in Michigan and the Great Lakes region.

According to Chris Angel, GLCW co-founder the idea of taking unused/unwanted drugs to a pharmacy for proper disposal was fairly new in 2008. When the program began, existing Solid Waste Regulations in Michigan included some barriers to pharmacies collecting drug waste. GLCW supported changes to the solid waste regulations and in the interim, GLCW operated in accordance with an Enforcement Discretion Letter from the DEQ. GLCW pushed for changes in the solid waste laws and was instrumental in getting the new legislation enacted. Many organizations supported the legislation including; Michigan Pharmacy Association, Detroit Renewable Power, Michigan Recycling Coalition and Michigan DEQ.

The Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program is currently the largest program of its kind providing service to Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. Plans are underway to provide the program to IN, OH, NY, PA and MN in 2014 and 2015. Since starting, the program has collected over 45.75 tons of unused/unwanted drugs in partnership with participating pharmacies.

Great Lakes Clean Water and the Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program have impacted major changes being proposed in the collection of controlled substances at pharmacies on a federal level. When the program started and under current federal regulations, pharmacies may not collect controlled substances for disposal. Controlled substances must be disposed of at a Law Enforcement Agency with approval of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). In planning for the Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program in 2008 organizers planned for the eventuality of pharmacies being able to collect controlled substances in the future. Collection and disposal of drugs on a large scale at pharmacies began to get a lot of attention due to the successes of the Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program in the Great Lakes Region. In December, 2012 the DEA published proposed rules that will allow pharmacies to collect controlled substances. Final rules are expected to be enacted in 2014. GLCW and the Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program plan to be one of the first programs in the country collecting controlled substances at pharmacies for safe and secure disposal.

For its innovation and commitment to safe and secure disposal of pharmaceuticals, Great Lakes Clean Water Organization was named site of the month by the Great Lake Information Network (GLIN). A Great Lakes Commission project, the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN) is an online gateway to the Great Lakes region. GLIN's data and services cover the environment, economy, tourism, education, maps, demographics and more. Launched in 1993, GLIN is growing and currently averaging more than 4.5 million hits per month. Visit GLIN at www.great-lakes.net
A non-profit based in Michigan having a positive impact locally, in the Great Lakes Region and across the country.