



## Legislative Concept Request 466:

# Drug Take Back Product Stewardship for Unwanted Medicines

Approximately 1/3 of the medicines purchased in America go unused. These medicines often remain at home or are improperly disposed of in ways that are dangerous for public and environmental health. Improper disposal (flushing) contributes to pollution in waterways and water supplies. Medicines are dangerous or hazardous wastes and leachate from landfills ends up in the water system. Treatment by septic or wastewater systems may not be effective, depending on the chemical makeup of the drug.

Medicines may also end up being ingested improperly, since many mistakenly think prescription drugs are safer to abuse than street drugs. The mishandling and misuse of unused medicines are causing public safety, public health, environmental concerns for Oregonians. Medicines are leading cause of unintentional injury deaths and are a common cause of poisonings/ER visits. To help address these issues, the FDA, DEA, and EPA recommend secure medicine take-back as better than trash disposal.

The current patchwork collection system in Oregon relies on local governments to provide collection boxes in sheriffs or police stations and some pharmacies participating on a volunteer basis. The DEA also sponsors twice-a-year collection events. Nevertheless, a statewide program would ensure that all Oregonians would have access to a method of securely disposing of unused medication in a way that is protective of the environment and public health.

### Completing the Picture for Emergency Planning

LC 466 would establish a statewide drug take-back program to enhance access to safe and responsible disposal opportunities. The program requires that pharmaceutical companies selling products in Oregon create a “stewardship organization” that will collect, transport and dispose of unused medicines. The organization will have to develop a stewardship plan that meets state approved performance requirements that will include:

- convenient collection of all household medicines,
- protocols in compliance with DEA Rule and other applicable regulations,
- environmentally sound disposal,
- promotion and evaluation,
- deadlines for stewardship plan submission and program implementation, and
- enforcement and auditing mechanisms.

The costs, to be borne by the companies selling pharmaceuticals in Oregon, have been estimated to be approximately 0.1% of annual medicine sales.

DEQ is coordinating with the Board of Pharmacy and the Opioid Epidemic Task Force on this concept, which would also match legislation recently passed in Washington, California, and New York.

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