

Meeting Summary

Drug Take-Back Public Meeting

December 13, 2022 / Virtual

DEQ held a public meeting to review the implementation of the Oregon Drug Take-Back Program in its first program year (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). The meeting included presentations by Drug Takeback Solutions Foundation and MED-Project USA, LLC, the two program operators implementing the Program.



List of Attendees

Drug Takeback Solutions Foundation

- Chris Smith
- Kevin Baldwin
- Wendy Janney
- Kristen Kavakava
- Nicholas Massaro
- Erica Paredez

Med-Project USA

- Victoria Travis
- Grant Feichtinger
- Jim Wilson

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

- Michael Lee
- Alex Bertolucci
- Abby Boudouris
- Cheryl Grabham
- Rachel Harding
- Steve Siegel

Members of the public

- Hanz Atia
- Belinda Ballah
- Alexandria Bluemmel
- Morgan Buchan
- Robert Burks
- Jeff Clare
- Darrell Cullen
- Mary Curry
- Jill Dale
- Nicole DiPietro
- Cynthia Dunn
- Brianne Efremoff
- John Gay
- Barb Hansen
- Becky Haworth
- Apryl Herron
- Miranda Hill
- Dwight Holton
- Naomi Hunsaker
- Debby Jones
- Shawn Krueger

Members of the public, cont'd

- Alexander LaVake
- Holly Lusk
- Jett Marney
- Liliana Mejia
- Shawn Miller
- Sophia O'Meara
- Kurt Pomrenke
- Joe Schnabel
- Margaret Shield
- Jason Smyth
- Priyanka Talanki
- Eric Yee

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Overview of Today's Meeting

DEQ welcomed participants to the Oregon Drug Take-Back Program public meeting, which DEQ convened to discuss program implementation for the Drug Take-Back Program's first completed year (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022). The Program is a product stewardship program that provides statewide collection and disposal of unwanted household medicines.

Introduction of Drug Take-Back Program Operators

The Drug Takeback Solutions Foundation and MED-Project USA, the program operators implementing programs under the Drug Take-Back Program, introduced themselves.

Note: presentations are available on the DEQ webpage at <https://drugtakeback.oregon.gov/>.

DEQ Presentation

DEQ provided a general overview of the Program, including the collection services and public awareness activities that program operators must make available to Oregon residents and other covered entities related to safe and secure disposal of unwanted household medicines. DEQ outlined key roles, including those of manufacturers, which participate in the program; program operators, which must implement their programs according to their program plans or changes as approved by DEQ; and DEQ and the Oregon Board of Pharmacy, which share oversight responsibilities.

DEQ noted it is currently reviewing both program operators' draft annual reports, and has serious concerns about the Foundation program's underperformance in meeting its own goals for the first program year. DEQ stated it communicated these concerns to the Foundation and expects the Foundation to make significant investments to make up for this shortfall and ensure that it can meet its more ambitious goals in years 2 and beyond.

If DEQ determines a program is not operating in compliance with its approved plan, DEQ will refer the issue to its Office of Compliance and Enforcement for appropriate action.

DEQ also noted that it had received inquiries about the Foundation's report. These inquiries included why nearly a quarter of the collection sites show no pounds collected, why the Foundation has spent so little, and whether this is promoted as a selling point to manufacturers. The inquiries also included questions about the effectiveness of the Foundation's public awareness campaigns and why the Foundation has not conducted advertisements on Oregon television or radio. DEQ stated that the Foundation had an opportunity today to address these concerns. DEQ will relay its own questions regarding the draft annual reports to program operators after completing its review.

Questions were raised after DEQ's presentation, including how program operators have worked to establish relationships with big box stores.

Drug Takeback Solutions Foundation Presentation

Presenter: Chris Smith, President

Mr. Smith gave an overview of the Foundation's services, which included 161 drop off sites, 464 mail-back distribution sites, and five events. The Foundation reported progress in collection, collecting 6,935.05 pounds in the last six months of the program year compared to 1,083.45 in the first six months.

MED-Project Presentation

Presenter: Victoria Travis, National Program Director

Ms. Travis gave an overview of MED-Project's services, which included 251 drop off sites, 136 mail-back distribution sites and three events. MED-Project reported exceeding its goal of having over 90% of residents within a 20-minute drive of a drop box. MED-Project also reported exceeding its collection goal of approximately 16,000 pounds of covered drugs, collecting 55,903 pounds at drop-off sites and 741 pounds through mail-back.

Input from Interested Parties

Members of the public provided input around the following topics:

Collection

There was discussion around the number of pounds collected through mail-back services and whether information about the amount of opioids prescribed and collected could be ascertained. DEA regulations, however, regulate the handling of collected drugs.

Mail-back supplies for hospice providers

There was discussion about how to help hospice programs get a sufficient supply of mail-back envelopes to service the hundreds or thousands of patients the hospice programs see each year. Many hospice patients

lack means to drive to a drop-off site. One participant that works with hospice programs estimated that there are approximately 24,000 patients on hospice in Oregon every year.

Program operators' performance

Concerns were raised that a program operator's underperformance could result in a race to the bottom. The difficulty in measuring the contribution of one program operator's activities versus another program operator's activities in raising public awareness was also discussed.

Education and Outreach

Participants from the public health sector noted willingness to partner with program operators in promoting locations and opportunities to residents and to connect program operators with focus groups.

Collection network

There was discussion about how the existence of two program operators could result in more collection opportunities being available than the minimum set forth in statute.

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