The vast majority of medicines sold in the U.S. are IMPROPERLY discarded or stored in the home.

You can take action now that will help reverse this trend, preventing accidental prescription drug overdoses and reducing environmental contamination.

Support the Implementation of Pharmaceutical Take-Back Programs

PROBLEM #1: Safety Concerns

Drug Abuse
America is in the throes of a prescription drug abuse epidemic. According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2009, more than 7 million Americans reported having used prescription medication for non-medical purposes. What’s alarming is that this figure includes 12 and 13-year-olds, who report abusing prescription drugs more than any other type of drug. Not surprisingly, statistics also show that 7 out of 10 prescription pain relief abusers get their drugs from family and friends.

Accidental Poisonings
Leftover prescription drugs also increase the risk of accidental poisoning. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 2004 and 2005, more than 56,000 children ended up in emergency rooms from being poisoned by drugs after having consumed them while unsupervised.

PROBLEM #2: Environmental Concerns

Contaminated Waterways
When flushed or disposed of in the garbage, over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs, including potent controlled substances, can enter our waterways and potentially contaminate our drinking water supply. Part of the reason for this is that water treatment plants in the U.S. are not designed to filter out pharmaceutical compounds, so trace levels of prescription drugs are often detected in treated municipal water supplies. There are no studies to indicate what the long-term health effects of repeated exposure to these trace levels of drugs in drinking water might be.

Harm to Aquatic Life
Research has shown that fish and other marine life exposed to trace pharmaceuticals in our water bodies suffer from health complications that are directly linked to drug exposure. For example, as a result of being exposed to estrogen found in certain prescription drugs, certain male fish have become physiologically feminized.

SOLUTION
Take-Back Programs

What is a Take-Back Program?
Take-back programs provide a simple, convenient way for consumers to dispose of their leftover medications safely and responsibly. They help reduce the safety and environmental risks associated with improper storage and disposal of pharmaceuticals by making leftover meds inaccessible to children, pets, and potential abusers, and by keeping them out of our waterways.

Take-back programs can come in three forms:

- One-Day Take-Back Events
- Permanent Collection Sites
- Mail-Back Programs

Take-back programs that are funded by pharmaceutical manufacturers and consumers, rather than by government, are particularly beneficial, as they free up government funds for other critical needs, such as education, public safety, and community improvements. And unlike government-funded programs, they are more financially sustainable.

Continued on reverse side
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a form of product stewardship that:

- Is mandated by law
- Focuses on the end-of-life management of products

Product stewardship is a policy approach that:

- Holds manufacturers ("producers") financially and managerially responsible for post-consumer products and packaging
- Minimizes the health, safety, and social impacts of products
- Maximizes the economic benefits of a product and its packaging
- Considers all lifecycle stages of a product, from design to end-of-life

What is Product Stewardship?

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Local

In 2012, Alameda County, CA passed the first ordinance of its kind in the nation, requiring drug manufacturers to manage and finance the collection of unwanted pharmaceuticals.

State

Since 2009, eight states have introduced bills requiring pharmaceutical manufacturers to finance and manage take-back programs for unwanted, leftover drugs. These states are Florida, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Federal

In 2011, U.S. Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY) introduced the Pharmaceutical Stewardship Act (H.R. 2939) in Congress and has plans to reintroduce it in 2013.

Canada

British Columbia and Ontario have been taking a product stewardship approach to managing pharmaceuticals waste for over 15 years.

Take Action!

Show Your Support for Take-Back Programs!

1. Contact your state and local legislative representatives. Ask for their support of pharmaceutical take-back program legislation.
2. Contact your U.S. Senators and Members of Congress. Ask them to support the federal Pharmaceutical Stewardship Act.
3. Contact pharmaceutical manufacturers. Encourage them to support take-back programs.

For More Info, Contact:

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