Key Elements of Pharmaceutical Collection and Disposal Programs:
A Vision for the Great Lakes Region

Significant progress has been made to establish safe and secure medicine collection and disposal programs in the Great Lakes Region. These programs include collections through retail pharmacies, clinics, law enforcement agencies, and municipal facilities, as well as through mail-back programs. Due primarily to funding constraints, programs are unable to fully meet the needs of residents throughout the region. The following key elements of a model program were developed by local and state agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders, with the goal to expand effective pharmaceutical collection and disposal programs throughout the region.

- Programs should protect public health and the environment by maximizing prompt collection and proper disposal of unused pharmaceuticals, including controlled substances. To this end, programs should be:
  - On-going. Residents should have year-round access to safe disposal opportunities for pharmaceutical drugs, reducing the need for home storage.
  - Convenient throughout the Great Lakes region. Programs should be available to all residents throughout the Great Lakes region. Eventually, there should be ongoing collection sites in every county, and every town or city of a population of 5,000 or greater. Mail-in services can help to fill gaps.
  - Set up to collect all types of pharmaceutical drugs. To the extent feasible under state and federal regulations, programs should accept all types of pharmaceuticals from households.
  - Secure. All programs must be operated in a secure manner, and in compliance with all state and federal regulations. Security is critical to minimizing the risk of illegal diversion.
  - Free at the point of delivery for disposal. There should be no charge to the public when they deliver unwanted pharmaceutical drugs via a collection location or mail-in service.
  - Widely promoted. A high level of public awareness must be created about the importance of safely storing and promptly disposing unused medications through the program. Public education should be a shared responsibility of all key stakeholders including those who prescribe, dispense, and manufacture pharmaceuticals.

- Programs should minimize the impact on the environment by ensuring that collected medicines are destroyed in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. When possible, all material collected should be destroyed through high temperature incineration, or with the best available technology, to minimize the risk of environmental contamination. To the extent possible, transportation of wastes should be minimized.

- Programs should be sustainably and adequately funded to ensure continued service and widespread public outreach. Those who benefit from the manufacture, sale, and use of pharmaceutical drugs have the greatest responsibility for ensuring program success. Pharmaceutical companies should fund the expansion of existing programs and/or the development of new ones. Other stakeholders, including state and local governments, pharmacies, and prescribers should partner with pharmaceutical companies to educate the public, provide collection services, and/or implement other activities consistent with their capabilities and mission.

- Programs should also identify and address the underlying drivers that contribute to pharmaceutical waste. Reducing the quantity of drugs that become waste not only reduces environmental and public health risks, it also has the potential to improve medical care and reduce medical costs for individuals and taxpayers through Medicare and Medicaid programs. It may also reduce costs for manufacturers, distributors and retail establishments.
Endorsements
(as of May 31, 2012)

Agnesian HealthCare Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin
The City of Wyoming, Michigan
City of Wyoming, Michigan Clean Water Plant
Clean Wisconsin
Center for Environmental Initiatives, New York
Coalition for Safe Medication Disposal, New York
Drug Free Communities of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Board of Directors
Great Lakes Clean Water Organization, Yellow Jug Old Drugs Program, Michigan
Indiana Household Hazardous Waste Task Force
The Iron County Health Department, Wisconsin
Kane County Energy and Environment Committee, Illinois
Kent County Michigan Department of Public Works, Michigan
Livingston County Community Alliance, Michigan
The Michigan Recycling Coalition, Board of Directors
Midwest Product Stewardship Council
Northwoods Coalition, Wisconsin
Ohio Environmental Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Philadelphia Chapter
Prohealth Care, Waukesha, Wisconsin
University of Wisconsin - Extension Waste Education Center
Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board, Minnesota
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Michigan
Together For Jackson County Kids, Wisconsin
The Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
The Wisconsin Council on Recycling
Solid Waste Association of North America – Wisconsin Badger Chapter
Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, Illinois
Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, Illinois
The Superior Watershed Partnership, Michigan
The Westlawn Residents Council, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
David J. Benke, Director, Resource Management and Assistance Division, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Barb Bickford, mother of a teenager who abused Rx drugs and died of addiction, Madison, Wisconsin
Thomas Cmar, Midwest Program Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council
Marie C. Falk, Executive Administrative Secretary, Poynette Wisconsin Police Department
Tom Koulentes, Assistant Principal, Highland Park High School, Township District 113, Highland Park, IL
Alvin A. Krause R.Ph., Copps Pharmacy, Appleton, Wisconsin
Teri Moe, Senior Director, Waupaca Senior Center
Maria S. Sepulveda DVM, PhD, Associate Professor of Ecotoxicology and Aquatic Animal Health, Purdue University, Indiana
John Stanovich, R.Ph., Assistant Dean of Pharmacy, The University of Findlay, Ohio

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