

## **Supporting a secure, convenient medicine return program to reduce the public safety and environmental impacts of unwanted medicines.**

**WHEREAS** drug overdose deaths have increased to surpass car accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in Washington State, and 40% of poisoning deaths involve prescription opioid pain relievers<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS** abuse of prescription pain killers ranks second, only behind marijuana, as the Nation's most prevalent illegal drug problem<sup>2</sup> and

**WHEREAS** abuse of medicines by teenagers is an growing problem, including abuse of prescription drugs such as painkillers, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety drugs, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medications, as well as over-the-counter drugs, such as cough and cold remedies<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS** over half of the people using prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons obtained them from a friend or relative for free<sup>4</sup> and 15% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders in Washington who abused prescription pain relievers got them from their own home or someone else's home without permission<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS** unwanted medicines left in the home could increase opportunities for drug abuse, drug diversion, and accidental poisonings and

**WHEREAS** unwanted medicines disposed to sanitary sewer systems are not completely treated by the wastewater treatment facilities, allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment<sup>6</sup> and

**WHEREAS** most medicines designate as either hazardous waste under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) (42 USC 6901) and/or as dangerous waste under the Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations (Chapter 173-303 WAC) when discarded<sup>7</sup> and

**WHEREAS** disposal of unwanted medicines to residential garbage is not secure and medicines in solid waste systems may end up in landfill leachate, which may be pumped to wastewater treatment facilities, eventually allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment<sup>8</sup> and

**WHEREAS** pharmaceuticals have been detected in the surface waters of Washington State and around the United States<sup>9,10</sup> and in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan areas affecting 41 million Americans<sup>11</sup> and

**WHEREAS** the number and volume of pharmaceuticals prescribed to U.S. residents has increased dramatically in the past decade<sup>12</sup> with Washington State residents now purchasing an average of 9 prescriptions per year<sup>13</sup> resulting in greater accumulations in Washington State homes, and

**WHEREAS** unused or unwanted quantities of prescription and over-the-counter medicines are projected to be substantial, with some studies estimating that between 30% and 80% of patients do not finish commonly prescribed medicines such as pain medicines, antibiotics, and beta blockers<sup>14</sup> and

**WHEREAS** a pilot medicine return project operating in Washington State since October of 2006 by Group Health Cooperative and Bartell Drugs has collected more than 40,000 pounds of unwanted household pharmaceuticals as of March 2010, demonstrating the demand and feasibility of such a system<sup>15</sup> and

**WHEREAS** sustainable funding sources are needed to provide or continue operation of take back programs for legally prescribed controlled substances at sheriff and police offices in Washington counties and cities and

**WHEREAS** communities are struggling to implement and finance programs to address the public safety impacts of leftover medicines in resident's homes and the environmental impacts of improper disposal of unwanted medicines, and

**WHEREAS** pharmaceutical manufacturers currently operate and fund successful drug take-back systems in Canada and several countries in Europe,

*Draft Resolution Language in Support of Medicine Return Programs.*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that [City or Association Name] supports establishment of a convenient, safe, secure, and environmentally sound medicine return program for unwanted medicines from households through an internalized pharmaceutical manufacturer financing mechanism that covers the cost of collection, transportation, and hazardous waste disposal, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Warner M, Chen LH, Makuc DM. Increase in fatal poisonings involving opioid analgesics in the United States, 1999-2006. NCHS data brief, no 22. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2009. Available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db22.htm#citation>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>2</sup> National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2005, *Under the Counter: The Diversion and Abuse of Controlled Prescription Drugs in the U.S.* Available online at: <http://www.casacolumbia.org/absolutem/articlefiles/380-Under%20the%20Counter%20-%20Diversion.pdf>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>3</sup> "Prescription for Danger: A Report on the Troubling Trend of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse Among the Nation's Teens", Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, January, 2008. Available online at: [http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/prescription\\_report.pdf](http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/prescription_report.pdf), accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2007. *Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings.* Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-32, DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4293). Available online at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6Results.cfm#TOC>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>5</sup> 2008 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey. Available online at: <http://www.hys.wa.gov/Reporting/Default.aspx>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>6</sup> Lubliner, B. and Ragsdale, D., 2008, *Quality Assurance Project Plan, Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in Wastewater Treatment Systems.* Washington Department of Ecology Publication No. 08-03-112. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0803112.html> Accessed online 5/12/10

<sup>7</sup> WA Dept. of Ecology. (2008) *Guide for Dangerous Pharmaceutical Waste Generators in Washington State*, Publication 07-04-025. Accessed online 5/12/2010 from <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0704025.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Nason, J. A., 2007, *Literature Review: Occurrence and Fate of Pharmaceutical Compounds in Landfill Leachate*, Oregon Pharmaceutical Take Back Stakeholder Group Final Report. Available online at: [http://www.oracwa.org/downloads/drugtakeback-rpt\\_0907.pdf](http://www.oracwa.org/downloads/drugtakeback-rpt_0907.pdf), accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, A., B. Carey, and S. Golding, 2004, *Results of a Screening Analysis for Pharmaceuticals in Wastewater Treatment Plant Effluents, Wells, and Creeks in the Sequim-Dungeness Area.* Available online at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0403051.html>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>10</sup> Kolpin, D.W., et al., 2002, *Pharmaceuticals, Hormones, and Other Organic Wastewater Contaminants in U.S. Streams, 1999-2000*, Environ. Sci. Technol. V. 36 no. 6, p. 1202-1211. Abstract available online at: <http://pubs.acs.org/cgi-bin/abstract.cgi/esthag/2002/36/i06/abs/es011055j.html>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>11</sup> Associated Press, "AP Probe Finds Drugs in Drinking Water", Seattle Times, March 12, 2008. Available online at: [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2004271213\\_appharmawateri.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2004271213_appharmawateri.html), accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>12</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007, *Prescription Drug Trends Fact Sheet*, Available online at: [http://www.kff.org/rxdrugs/upload/3057\\_06.pdf](http://www.kff.org/rxdrugs/upload/3057_06.pdf), accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>13</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008, *Washington: Retail Prescription Drugs Filled at Pharmacies (Annual per Capita)*, Available online at: <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/profileind.jsp?ind=267&cat=5&rqn=49>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>14</sup> Bound, J. P. and Voulvoulis, N., 2005, *Household Disposal of Pharmaceuticals as a Pathway for Aquatic Contamination in the United Kingdom*, Environmental Health Perspectives Volume 113, Number 12, Dec. 2005. Available online at: <http://www.ehponline.org/members/2005/8315/8315.pdf>, accessed 10/13/09.

<sup>15</sup> Pharmaceuticals from Households: A Return Mechanism (PH:ARM) pilot program in Washington State, see [www.medicinereturn.com](http://www.medicinereturn.com) for more information and reports. Accessed 04/20/10.