



# SECURE MEDICINE RETURN FOR WASHINGTON

HB 1165 / SB 5279

## *The Problem:*

### **Unwanted Medicines in Our Homes Increase Risks of Poisoning, Abuse, and Improper Disposal**

Medicines save lives and treat illnesses. But expired or left-over drugs need to be handled safely and disposed of properly to prevent harm to people and our environment.

Drugs that accumulate in our medicine cabinets can contribute to accidental poisonings and illegitimate access that can lead to abuse. Some of the unwanted medicine that is flushed down toilets or thrown in the trash will end up in our surface or ground waters, potentially impacting aquatic organisms.

Demand for a safe way to dispose of medicines is high. A pilot program to take back unwanted medicines in Washington at Group Health Cooperative and select Bartell Drugs locations has collected more than 15,000 pounds of unwanted medicines in their original containers since October 2006, with limited locations and little advertising. *See [www.medicinereturn.com](http://www.medicinereturn.com).*

## **The Solution: A Secure Medicine Return Program for Washington**

**The Secure Medicine Return Bill** will create a producer-provided medicine return program that is convenient, safe and secure for residents throughout the state. Prescription and over-the-counter medicines will be collected and disposed using the safest technology currently available to help prevent poisonings, misuse, and environmental contamination.

The bill sets up a shared responsibility approach:

- **Producer-Provided Program:** The bill sets minimum program requirements, but does not mandate specific collection methods. Producers of prescription and over-the-counter medications will have the flexibility to use their expertise to create the best and most cost-effective program. Producers may work together to create a program or may create a program on their own. Drug producers will pay for collection, transportation and disposal. Manufacturers of medicines have more than ten years of experience providing and paying for a medicine return program in British Columbia and are operating similar programs in other countries, including Italy, Spain, and France.
- **State Government Oversight:** The Department of Ecology will review, approve, and monitor the take-back program, with consultation from the Board of Pharmacy. Agency staffing for the program will be minimal, but will provide essential oversight.
- **Voluntary Retailer Involvement:** If medicine producers want to offer collection sites in pharmacies, retailers can choose to participate or not. However, results of the pilot project here in Washington and similar programs in British Columbia and Europe, suggest many retail pharmacies will want to voluntarily assist with this customer service.

## **About Costs of a Medicine Return Program:**

The Secure Medicine Return Bill will not require any money from the state general fund. Medicine producers will fund all costs of the medicine return program, with no charge to consumers when returning medicines and no new costs to local governments. All costs for Washington State agencies to provide rulemaking, oversight and enforcement will be fully recovered through a fee paid by manufacturers. Overall costs of a medicine return program will depend on the type of program the drug producers choose to set up and their contract arrangements. Costs are expected to be relatively small compared to the \$3.1 billion in annual sales of prescription and over-the-counter medicines in Washington State. If the estimated cost of a medicine return program is spread over all the prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines sold in Washington State, it would only cost from one to two pennies per container of medicine sold.

# Supporters of the Secure Medicine Return Bill HB 1165 / SB 5279



## **BUSINESSES & ASSOCIATIONS**

Bartell Drugs  
Jim's Pharmacy, Sequim  
Lafferty's Pharmacy, Seattle  
Washington State Recycling Association

## **HEALTH & MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

American Academy of Pediatrics - Washington  
State Chapter  
Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses  
Breast Cancer Fund  
Children's Alliance  
Home Care Association of Washington  
Institute for Children's Environmental Health  
Institute for Neurotoxicology & Neurological  
Disorders  
Planned Parenthood Public Policy Network of  
Washington  
School Nurse Organization of Washington  
Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA)  
Foundation  
Washington Poison Center  
Washington Private Duty Association  
Washington State Association of Occupational  
Health Nurses  
Washington State Hospice & Palliative Care  
Organization  
Washington State Medical Association  
Washington State Nurses Association  
Washington State Psychological Association

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

American Rivers  
Environment Washington  
National Wildlife Federation  
People For Puget Sound  
Sierra Club Cascade Chapter  
Surfrider Foundation  
The Nature Conservancy  
Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation  
Washington Environmental Council  
Washington Toxics Coalition

## **CIVIC & FAITH ORGANIZATIONS**

Earth Ministry  
League of Women Voters of Washington  
Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State  
Ryan's Solution  
Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby  
WashPIRG

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & ASSOCIATIONS**

City of Seattle  
Clark County  
Coalition for Clean Water  
King County  
Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King  
County  
Public Health – Seattle & King County  
Snohomish County  
Washington State Association of Counties

*Last updated January 20, 2009*



*For more information, contact:* Suellen Mele, Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation: 206-856-4761  
or Margaret Shield, Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County: 206-265-9732

- January 2009 -