

# Secure Medicine Return



## Reducing access to prescription drugs to protect our children & our families

### **Prescription drug abuse is a serious and growing problem in our communities.**

Abuse of medicines—especially opiate pain relievers like OxyContin, codeine, and Vicodin—is increasing rapidly.

**The consequences are serious.** Drug overdoses have surpassed car accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in Washington. The majority of overdoses involve prescription opiates. Youth admissions to state funded treatment for prescription opiates are now 19 times higher than in 2001.

**Our kids and teens are at risk.** Misused prescription drugs are the illicit drugs of choice among 12- and 13-year olds. For the first time among teens, there are as many new abusers of prescription drugs as marijuana abusers.

**Our medicine cabinets are taking the place of drug dealers.** Three in five teens say prescription pain relievers are easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets. Over half of prescription drug abusers get the medicines from a friend or relative. More than half of teens say pain relievers are "available everywhere".

## Medicine Return Programs can help reduce access to prescription drugs to prevent abuse.

**Getting rid of unneeded medicines from our homes safely helps reduce access to drugs that could be abused.** Flushing medicines is bad for the environment, and measurable amounts of drugs end up in downstream drinking water. Throwing medicines in the garbage—especially drugs like OxyContin—is just not safe because the drugs can be obtained and used illegally.

**Medicine return programs provide a secure way to dispose of pain relievers and other unwanted medicines.** By partnering with law enforcement, medicine return programs can securely collect and destroy controlled substances. Sheriffs and police are operating drug take-back programs at more than 40 locations in Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties. Many other communities are working to develop programs, but funding is a challenge.

**We need a sustainable source of funding to ensure that everyone in our state has access to a medicine return program.** Voluntary programs at some police stations and some pharmacies demonstrate the strong community demand for drug take-back, but these are stop-gap measures without long-term funding, and serve only a small percentage of the state.

**The Secure Medicine Return Bill (2SHB 1165/2SSB 5279 in 2010 session) will ensure that a secure and convenient statewide medicine return program is provided by medicine producers.** These companies already provide and pay for medicine return in British Columbia and several European countries.



*ER visits in Seattle for non-medical use of prescription opiates went up 47% from 2004 to 2007.*



*Secure medicine drop box in a Washington police station.*

## Organizations Supporting the Secure Medicine Return Bill in 2010 include:

Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs (WACOPS) | Washington State Fraternal Order of Police | Clallam County Sheriff | Clark County Sheriff's Office | Snohomish County Sheriff's Office | Spokane County Sheriff's Office | Thurston County's Sheriff Office | City of Milton Police Department | Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention | Children's Alliance | Washington State Pharmacy Association | Association of Northwest Pharmacies | Bartell Drugs | Washington State Hospice & Palliative Care *continued*

## Organizations Supporting the 2010 Secure Medicine Return Bill (continued):

Organization | Washington Poison Center | Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council | PREVENT! The Substance Abuse Council of Clark County | Science and Management of Addictions (SAMA) Foundation | Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby | American Academy of Pediatrics - Washington State Chapter | Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses | Breast Cancer Fund | Compassion & Choices of Washington | 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 | Washington Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Association | Washington Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians | Washington Private Duty Association | Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials | Washington State Association of Occupational Health Nurses | Washington State Medical Association | Washington State Nurses Association | Washington State Psychological Association | Jim's Pharmacy, Sequim | American Rivers | Environment Washington | National Wildlife Federation | People For Puget Sound | Puget Sound Partnership | Sierra Club Cascade Chapter | Surfrider Foundation | The Nature Conservancy | Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation | Earth Ministry | League of Women Voters of Washington | Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State | Older Women's League, Seattle/King County Chapter | Ryan's Solution | WashPIRG | Washington Environmental Council | Washington Toxics Coalition | Washington State Recycling Association | City of Auburn | City of Issaquah | City of Kirkland | City of Lake Forest Park | 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 | Snohomish Health District | Tacoma-Pierce County Health District | Thurston County Board of Health | Washington State Association of Counties

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