

# Washington State PH:ARM Pilot Project Summary of Work and Contacts

As of April 18, 2008

**Medicine Take Back Pilot Project** – PH:ARM (Pharmaceuticals from Households: A Return Mechanism) is the first pilot project in the nation to have ongoing multi-county medicine take-back locations at pharmacies statewide.

- The pilot project began in October 2006 and will end in late 2008.
- Group Health Cooperative now offers collection at all 25 of their Washington State clinics. To date more than 7500 pounds (net wt.) of consumer-packaged drugs have been collected.
- Bartell Drugs retail pharmacy chain has just opened its first collection site and will soon expand to 10 collection sites around Puget Sound.
- Collection locations can be found at <http://www.medicinereturn.com/>.
- Two boarding homes will begin accepting unwanted medicines in late April 2008.

***Chloe Birnel and Cathy Buller – Pacific NW Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC)***  
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**Secure Container Development** – Conceptualized, constructed and tested crude prototypes. Worked with dVault Company, Inc. to finalize a secure, convenient container for pharmacy based returns. The design is now in use at Group Health clinics and Bartell Drugs. It is commercially available from dVault - <http://dvault.com/index.html>.

***Cheri Grasso – Local Haz. Waste Mgmt. Program in King County***  
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**Transportation** – Department of Transportation regulations offer some unique challenges when transporting collected pharmaceutical material. The PH:ARM team has determined the most cost effective ways to comply with these regulations.

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**Disposal** – There were many issues to consider regarding the destruction of household pharmaceuticals collected during the pilot project. PH:ARM team members developed a waste profile (chemical, physical and technical description) of drug wastes collected from households. The team has identified the appropriate disposal transporter and incineration sites for each of the collection models piloted (Group Health, Bartell Drugs, nursing homes).

***Alice Chapman –Local Haz. Waste Mgmt. Program in King County***  
***(206) 263-3058 Alice.Chapman@kingcounty.gov***

**Safety Checks and Inventory of Collected Drugs** – The team developed a “yes/no” list and screening procedures to assure safe incineration. PH:ARM also developed procedures to categorize a random sample of drugs collected in Group Health clinics. Example categories include legend, over-the-counter, hormones, and controlled substances.

***Alice Chapman –Local Haz. Waste Mgmt. Program in King County***  
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**DEA Waiver Request** - PH:ARM submitted a formal request to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), with detailed collection and disposal protocols, to allow the collection of controlled substances in the pilot project. We have the support of several Washington State officials including U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray, Attorney General Rob McKenna and Governor Christine Gregoire. The U.S. DEA believes their regulations do not allow for a waiver; however, they are revising their regulations to address this important need.

**Stan Jeppesen - WA Board of Pharmacy**  
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**Legislation** – Several PH:ARM team members worked on a Secure Medicine Return Bill in the 2008 Washington legislative session. The bill sought to establish a state-wide medicine return system, developed and funded by pharmaceutical manufacturers. The bill passed out of the Select Committee on Environmental Health with a unanimous, bipartisan vote; however, it did not move out of the fiscal committee. To view the bill, go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=3064&year=2007>. We are currently working toward successful passage of this legislation for 2009.

**Suellen Mele – Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation (WCRC)**  
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**Take-Back Policy Development** – The PH:ARM team is actively developing and piloting policies to establish an effective statewide takeback system for unwanted medications that can eventually serve as a national model. In this effort we have engaged elected officials at the state and federal level, non-profit organizations, regional and national policy groups, local, state and federal governmental organizations and the business community.

**David Stitzhal – NW Product Stewardship Council**  
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**Communications** – PH:ARM Team members developed and maintain a website that provides information on the issue, the pilot project, and household pharmaceutical collection sites: <http://www.medicinereturn.com/>. We also field media and project inquiries, and send periodic email updates to interested parties.

**Chloe Birnel – Pacific NW Pollution Prevention Resource Center (PPRC)**  
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**Final Disposal Working Group** - Currently, the best commercially available technology for disposal of collected pharmaceuticals is incineration at a hazardous waste facility. Some members of the PH:ARM team are coordinating a national working group to work towards the development of greener disposal methods. Although there is at least one particularly promising green chemistry disposal method, much work needs to be done before it can be used for collected household pharmaceuticals.

**Eva Dale – Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation (WCRC)**  
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**Upstream Think Tank** - WCRC is coordinating a local think tank to address waste prevention and ecotoxicity reduction for pharmaceuticals. The think tank is developing strategies targeting both drug design and dispensing practices. In the future, we will share the strategies nationally and will begin to implement them locally.

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