



## 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 February 14, 2012)

## Non-profit and Community Organizations

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin  
Center for Environmental Initiatives, New York  
Clean Wisconsin  
Coalition for Safe Medication Disposal, New York  
Great Lakes Clean Water Organization, Yellow Jug Old  
Drugs Program, Michigan  
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Board of  
Directors  
Livingston County Community Alliance, Michigan  
Indiana Household Hazardous Waste Task Force  
The Michigan Recycling Coalition, Board of Directors  
Midwest Product Stewardship Council  
Northwoods Coalition, Wisconsin  
Ohio Environmental Council  
Prohealth Care, Waukesha, Wisconsin  
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Philadelphia Chapter  
The Superior Watershed Partnership, Michigan  
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Michigan  
Together For Jackson County Kids, Wisconsin  
The Westlawn Partnership for a Healthier Environment,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
The Westlawn Residents Council, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## Local Governments and Agencies

The City of Wyoming, Michigan  
The Iron County Health Department, Wisconsin  
Kent County Michigan Department of Public Works,  
Michigan  
Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, Illinois  
City of Wyoming, Michigan Clean Water Plant  
Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, Illinois  
Kane County Energy and Environment Committee,  
Illinois

## Law Enforcement and Substance Abuse Organizations

Drug Free Communities of Fond du Lac County,  
Wisconsin

## Universities

University of Wisconsin - Extension Waste Education  
Center

## Individuals

Thomas Cmar, Midwest Program Attorney, Natural  
Resources Defense Council  
  
Maria S. Sepulveda DVM, PhD, Associate Professor of  
Ecotoxicology and Aquatic Animal Health, Purdue  
University, Indiana  
  
Marie C. Falk, Executive Administrative Secretary,  
Poynette Wisconsin Police Department  
  
Tom Kourentes, Assistant Principal, Highland Park High  
School, Township District 113, Highland Park, IL  
  
Alvin A. Krause R.Ph., Cops Pharmacy, Appleton,  
Wisconsin  
  
Rick Meyers, Chairperson of the Wisconsin Council on  
Recycling  
  
Teri Moe, Senior Director, Waupaca Senior Center  
  
Lyman C. Welch, Water Quality Program Manager,  
Alliance for the Great Lakes  
  
Barb Bickford, mother of a teenager who abused Rx  
drugs and died of addiction, Madison, Wisconsin  
  
John Stanovich, R.Ph., Assistant Dean of Pharmacy, The  
University of Findlay, Ohio