

MEDIA RELEASE

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Inslee introduces Safe Drug Disposal Act of 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Yesterday evening, U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) introduced a bill to help communities take back unused pharmaceuticals in a safe and environmentally responsible way. In response to constituent feedback, Inslee's bill works in conjunction with Washington state efforts led by state Rep. Dawn Morrell (D-Puyallup) and state Senator Adam Kline (D-Seattle) to establish a drug take back program in Washington state that can collect controlled substances and other dangerous pharmaceuticals.

Inslee's bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.), would amend the federal Controlled Substances Act to allow end users to safely dispose of all unused and unneeded medications through a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) approved program. The bill directs the DEA to create five approved drug take back program models that consider factors like environmental responsibility, public safety, and cost effectiveness and the different needs of rural and urban communities. Inslee's bill will allow approved drug take back programs to safely accept controlled substances like prescription painkillers without the need for a law enforcement officer to be present.

"This important bill lets people in my home state of Washington and others to keep the streets and waterways free from unused pharmaceuticals, including controlled and uncontrolled substances," said Inslee. "Flushed medications often seep into the water supply, which is unacceptable for people and the environment. As well, sixty three percent of teenagers surveyed in a 2005 study said they could easily obtain prescription opiates and painkillers in their own homes. Family medicine cabinet are drug dealers for today's youth, and this program puts a stop to that."

"Unused pharmaceuticals damage the environment and are increasingly being abused by teens in the home," said Moran. "This legislation establishes a simple, safe and effective way to dispose of old medications by allowing states to adopt take-back programs suited to the needs of their communities."

"Rep. Inslee ideas would give us the tools we need to solve some the key remaining issues in prescription drug return programs," said Morrell. "This is exactly the federal legislation we need to help our Washington state plan work more effectively and less expensively while ensuring that narcotics are disposed of safely."

Currently, existing law and DEA enforcement of the Controlled Substances Act make it difficult for end users to turn over unused medications for safe disposal. Unused prescription medications in a home can be easily accessed and abused, but medications flushed down the toilet or thrown into the trash are harmful to local waterways and the environment.

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