

Proper Drug Disposal

Why is proper drug disposal necessary?

- Protects our waters from contamination
- Prevents inadvertent exposure of humans and wildlife to prescription medications due to improper disposal
 - The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has reported that some prescription hormone therapies have been found to affect the reproductive organs of fish
- Prevent intentional or unintentional misuse
 - Prescription drug abuse is increasing among teens and young adults
 - Prescription drugs are relatively easy to obtain from friends or relatives
 - Prescription medications are a poison risk for children and pets

What is available in Nevada?

- No official program available for consumers
- Only Federal Guidelines for proper prescription drug disposal
- Retail pharmacies will take back medication if asked but these services are not advertised
- Hospitals are instructed to make a slurry of medications
 - Disposing of medications in sharps containers to be incinerated with other biohazardous materials

What are the Federal guidelines for proper disposal of prescription drugs?

- Take the unused, unneeded, or expired drugs out of their original containers.
- Mix the prescriptions drugs with an undesirable substance, like used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and put them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, further ensuring that the drugs are not diverted or accidentally ingested by children or pets
- Throw these containers in the trash
- Flush prescriptions drugs down the toilet only if the accompanying patient information specifically instructs it is safe to do so
- Return unused, unneeded, or expired prescriptions drugs to pharmaceutical take-back locations that allow the public to unused drugs to a central location for safe disposal

Why are the federal guidelines inadequate?

- Disposing of medications in landfills may lead to medications seeping into our groundwater supply
- Flushing certain drugs down the drain or toilet contributes to contamination of our waterways
- Only address methods of keeping unwanted medications “off the streets”
- Suggests the use of pharmaceutical take-back programs but does not elaborate on how this can be done

What is being done in other counties?

- Clark County, Washington: non-controlled substances are collected at local pharmacies while controlled substances are deposited in local sheriff's offices to be incinerated
- Kendall County, Illinois: all prescription medications are collected by a central police station
- La Crosse, Wisconsin: employees at central waste disposal site are deputized to collect and dispose of medications including any controlled substances
- Southern California: permanent collection sites and several mobile collection events held in different sites on a weekly basis
- Washington State: medications are collected at local pharmacies and nursing homes to be transported to a central site for destruction
- Various Other Sites: predetermined collection events where consumers can bring their unwanted medications to be destroyed
- *Success relies on adequate publicizing of programs and events for drug collection*
 - *Frequent events and convenient locations are key*

What is possible for Nevada? (Under current State and Federal Legislation)

Short term Goals

- Create an educational brochure informing consumers about the proper way to dispose of unwanted and expired medications
 - This information can be distributed at Southern Nevada Health District clinics and locations
- Create an educational video informing consumers about the proper way to dispose of unwanted and expired medications
 - This video can be played in SNHD clinics and locations as well as being featured on Health District TV for expanded public viewing
- Take back events can be organized on a bi-annual basis
 - Could be coordinated with the help of the local college of pharmacy (University of Southern Nevada) and local retail pharmacies

Long term Goals

- Medications, including controlled substances, can be collected at predetermined locations (i.e. SNHD clinics and locations) under the DEA number of an employed practitioner
 - DEA registration allows for proper documentation of controlled substances
- Medications can be collected in tamper and theft resistant drop boxes at each site
- Medications can be transported to a central waste disposal site for incinerated
- Coordination with the Nevada Board of Pharmacy to ensure legality
- Program can be publicized through Health District TV as well as on local television and radio stations
- Expenses could be covered by grant funding

Reference:

- DEA Office of Diversion Control
 - http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/mtgs/drug_chemical/2006/2006conference.htm
- Office of National Drug Control Policy: Federal Guidelines
 - http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/pdf/prescrip_disposal.pdf
- Pharmaceutical Take-Back Case Studies – Models of Success
 - <http://www.iisgcp.org/unwantedmeds/updatedToolkitMaterials/2.0CaseStudies.pdf>
- US Geological Survey
 - <http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc/>