



DATE: November 13, 2013

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: John Austin, Chair

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEALTH - SEATTLE & KING COUNTY SECURE MEDICINE RETURN REGULATIONS

Background and Summary:

On June 20, 2013, the King County Board of Health adopted secure medicine return regulations (King County BOH Code 11.50) requiring manufacturers of pharmaceuticals sold for use in the county in residential settings to implement a drug take-back program in partnership with other companies, or individually. The drug companies must provide this stewardship program at their expense without charging residents a fee when medicines are purchased or when unwanted drugs are dropped off or mailed in for disposal. The system must protect the confidentiality of consumer information on packaging. The unwanted drugs would be finally disposed of through incineration at an appropriately permitted facility.

Drug companies have a year to submit stewardship plans to Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) for review and approval. The drug companies must begin implementing plans within three months after receiving approval from PHSKC. The plans must cover prescription, nonprescription, brand name, and generic drugs, with some exceptions. The primary method of collection is by establishing drop-off sites in each town and area of the county with volunteer partners, including pharmacies and police stations. The stewardship programs would also allow consumers to send back drugs in prepaid, preaddressed mailers. The programs must meet all federal and state laws. Current Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) regulations restrict return of controlled substances to law enforcement drop-off sites; however, regulations being developed by DEA would allow return of controlled substances to pharmacy drop boxes and in mailers.

The Honorable Joe McDermott, King County Councilmember and King County Board of Health Chair, is here today with Margaret Shield, Local Hazardous Waste Management Program Policy Liaison, to explain the highlights of the ordinance and its development. Their presentation is included under Tab 08 of your packets. For its bold leadership, being only the second county in the country to adopt such a drug stewardship ordinance requiring industry financing, the King County Board of Health Subcommittee on Secure Medicine Return received the Washington State 2013 Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Award in the local government category.

Recommended Board Action:

None.

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