



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

*Environmental Sustainability Division*

**m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Mayor Laurel Lunt Prussing and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Scott R. Tess, Environmental Sustainability Manager  
**DATE:** 4/18/13  
**SUBJECT: Pharmaceutical Waste Collection Memo**

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**Background**

The C-U Medicine Take-Back Program combines campus research and resources to educate and engage students and residents of Champaign, Urbana, and the University of Illinois through curriculum and outreach activities along with the creation of a sustainable pharmaceutical take-back program. This take-back program helps address critical societal issues by preventing accidental poisonings of children, the elderly, and pets; reducing drug abuse; and limiting the amount of pharmaceutical chemicals entering the environment.

The Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) program will provide funds for advertising of safe medicine take-back as well as funds to purchase locked medicine take-back drop-boxes. Local police departments participate by providing space for the drop-boxes in their lobbies and transferring the collected medicines to a waste to energy incinerator for free disposal.

Since 2008, IISG has helped 34 communities in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan to develop sustainable medicine take-back programs. Their work has kept over 58,000 pounds of pharmaceuticals from reaching waterways and drinking water supplies. Given the research and outreach efforts of the University of Illinois on this issue, Champaign-Urbana should be a model for sustainable medicine stewardship. IISG and the local municipalities would continue the partnership after the grant period is over to ensure that the program continues long-term and would encourage other local police departments to become involved in this community partnership.

Additionally, staff from the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center have begun testing water samples for pharmaceutical waste contamination and will monitor any change that this collection program may have on water quality. The testing will take place where wastewater treatment facilities discharge to waterways.

**Fiscal Impact**

Expenses for the C-U Medicine Take-Back Program include collection boxes, printing, advertising, transportation, staffing, and disposal. Expenses for the boxes, printing, and advertising are paid for by IISG. Expenses for transportation and staffing for the first year of this program are being funded through community partnerships and may be extended into future years. Expenses for transportation and staffing are expected to be approximately \$3,000 per year. Expenses for disposal are waived by the incinerator, Covanta.

## **Outputs**

- 3 collection boxes installed. One each at Urbana Police lobby, Champaign Police lobby, and University Police lobby.
- Alternating transportation duties between Urbana, Champaign, Champaign County, and University Police departments.
- Public engagement on proper pharmaceutical disposal through ads and brochures.
- IISG estimates that 500 pounds of pharmaceutical waste will be properly disposed of per year.

Attachments:

cc: