



## Frequently Asked Questions on the NCPA Prescription Disposal Program, Dispose My Meds

NCPA's prescription disposal program, Dispose My Meds provides members with a valuable service that their patients want, which may result in increased foot traffic, new patients, and marketing opportunities for the pharmacy. In fact, past medication return programs around the country have found that as many as 40-49 percent of customers returning medications for disposal were from other pharmacies, presenting a tremendous opportunity for customer conversion while making a difference for your community with a safe solution to improper drug disposal and potential drug misuse.

Through a comprehensive, turnkey medication returns system community pharmacists will be able to:

- Respond to the demands of customers who prefer companies that provide environmental services
- Differentiate their business and potentially convert new patients through a low-cost program
- Highlight their role of as a valuable member in the community and showcase their leadership in protecting the environment and preventing medication misuse

### **An estimated 250 million pounds of unused medications are improperly disposed of each year. What are the adverse effects of improper disposal?**

- Environmental Impact
  - A 2008 Associated Press Investigation discovered a wide array of pharmaceuticals detected in the drinking water supplies of 24 major metropolitan areas affecting, at least 41 million Americans
  - Pharmaceuticals in the water are disrupting aquatic ecosystems and organisms
- Accidental Ingestion (children, elderly, pets)
- Prescription Medication Abuse
  - The Partnership at Drugfree.org reports that every day there are 2,500 teenagers using a prescription medication to get high for the first time
  - With the exception of marijuana, teens are abusing prescription medications more than any illicit drug

### **What is NCPA doing to address this growing concern?**

At NCPA's 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, the House of Delegates passed the following resolution on Prescription Drug Disposal Programs: *be it resolved, that NCPA promote that community pharmacists consider initiating medication disposal programs to properly dispose of pharmaceuticals and highlight their role as respected and knowledgeable resources on all aspects of medications.* NCPA is supportive of these programs in a voluntary manner.

In addition, NCPA has talked with dozens of Boards of Pharmacy about guidelines for a pharmacy's participation in a drug take back/disposal program in their state. Among Boards of Pharmacy and other numerous pharmacy groups, there is tremendous support for programs to help remove unused/expired drugs from the supply chain in a safe and environmentally-friendly manner. Most state pharmacy practice acts do not specifically address prescription medication take back programs for disposal. DEA however currently has specific guidelines restricting the return of controlled substances without the direct involvement of law enforcement. Therefore, Boards have said that any medication take back program conducted in a pharmacy should have the following characteristics:

- **No controlled substances returned.**
- **The medication take back box should not be freely accessible to the public.**
- **The pharmacist should be directly involved to ensure that controlled substances are not being placed into the return box (this is also an excellent opportunity for patient education and drug compliance counseling).**
- **Once box is full, return immediately via UPS or the US Postal Service for disposal.**

Should you have specific questions, check directly with your Board of Pharmacy to ensure that you are in full compliance with your respective state pharmacy regulations.

### **What materials will my pharmacy receive with participation in the NCPA Prescription Disposal Program?**

- Discounts on the products of the TakeAway™ Environmental Return System: a 10-gallon collection container; a 20-gallon collection container; or 8" x 11 "TakeAway Envelopes, which you can provide for free or sell to patients, who will fill them from home and mail directly to Sharps Compliance, Inc. for incineration.
- Free shipping on TakeAway™ Environmental Return System products to and from your store. (Please note there is a return weight limit of 50 lbs. for the 20-gallon TakeAway Environmental Return Systems. Returned systems weighing over 50 lbs. are subject to a charge of \$1.50 per pound in excess of 50 lbs.)
- Customizable marketing materials, including counter display, window cling, fliers, bag stuffers, and press releases for local media (received approximately one week after your order with Sharps).

### **How does the TakeAway™ Environmental Return System work?**

The Sharps TakeAway™ Environmental Return System is a safe, easy method to dispose of unused patient medications, available in 10 or 20 gallon pharmacy drop boxes or convenient postage pre-paid envelopes for patients to mail on their own. Patients and consumers can bring in their unwanted or expired medications and hand them over to the pharmacist, who will insert them into the TakeAway Environmental Return System kept behind the counter. When the box is full the pharmacist seals it and hands it off to a UPS carrier. The TakeAway Environmental Return System is pre-paid and pre-addressed for an incineration facility operated by Sharps Compliance, Inc. in Carthage, Texas, where incineration is witnessed by law enforcement. In addition, a pharmacy can choose to distribute envelopes to patients to drop their medications into, seal, and mail back to the incineration facility.

### **How will patients know of my service?**

There are two ways your patients and others can be made aware of your community service. The first is by reproducing the NCPA provided customizable in-store signs, flyers and bag stuffers, as well as using the media tools, such as a press release and letter to your local newspaper.

NCPA also will be generating public awareness through state-wide and national press coverage. A unique part of this coverage is a zip locator on a special consumer website, [www.disposemy meds.org](http://www.disposemy meds.org) that will list the name and address of participating pharmacies. In addition, participating pharmacies may benefit from offering the unique services of the TakeAway program with increased foot traffic in your pharmacy.

### **What items can be accepted into the TakeAway return system for disposal?**

Any pharmaceutical product, prescription or OTC, can be accepted for disposal, EXCLUDING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, syringes, thermometers, home-based care or durable medical equipment, and liquids over 4 oz.. Medications in any dosage form and any type of packaging are allowed, provided the medications are not controlled substances.

### **How long has Sharps treatment facility been in use?**

Sharps has a permitted facility, in use for 15 years. The facility is monitored and permitted to handle this waste in a responsible and environmentally sound manner.

### **Can I track TakeAway return system shipments through UPS?**

Yes. You can track TakeAway system purchases as they are shipped to your pharmacy and filled TakeAway systems can be tracked during return shipment to Texas.

For more information, visit [www.ncpanet.org/index.php/prescription-disposal-program](http://www.ncpanet.org/index.php/prescription-disposal-program), email [disposemy meds@ncpanet.org](mailto:disposemy meds@ncpanet.org) or call 1-800-544-7447.