

Proposed Snohomish Secure Medicine Return Regulation Summary of Draft for First Reading

This summary overviews key provisions of the proposed ordinance. For all requirements, see the full text at <http://www.snohd.org/Waste/Medicine-Disposal/Pharmaceutical-Stewardship>.

The Board of Health of the Snohomish Health District is considering a local ordinance to establish a convenient secure medicine return system for residents that:

- **Expands safe medicine disposal options** for Snohomish County residents to reduce risks of misuse, poisonings, and overdoses from leftover and expired medicines, and reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals entering sewer, septic, and solid waste systems.
- **Improves convenience for residents** by expanding locations of secure drop boxes from law enforcement offices to pharmacies and hospitals, as now allowed under DEA regulations.
- **Ensures financial sustainability** through a pharmaceutical industry-financed system providing sufficient resources to promote the program and handle larger volumes of returned medicines, and that relieves burdens on local government agencies and taxpayers.

Pharmaceutical Stewardship

The proposed regulation is a product stewardship policy where the manufacturers of the medicines sold in the county are required to finance and coordinate the secure medicine return system. Residents cannot be required to pay a fee for this service when purchasing or returning medicines.

Medicine producers will develop a stewardship plan explaining how they will meet the performance requirements defined in the proposed regulation. The Snohomish Health District (SHD) will review the stewardship plan and oversee the approved program for safety and compliance.

Medicines accepted for return

Residents can return leftover or expired prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medicines, including legally prescribed controlled substances such as opioids and amphetamines. Items not accepted include: over-the-counter drugs that are also personal care products like toothpaste, sunscreen, medicated shampoos; vitamins and supplements; and pharmaceutical wastes from businesses.

Secure Drop-off Sites and Other Collection Methods

Drug producers must arrange for secure drop boxes throughout the county at retail pharmacies, hospitals/clinics, law enforcement facilities, and other authorized collectors. Producers must partner with any pharmacy, hospital/clinic with on-site pharmacy, or law enforcement agency that volunteers to be a drop-off site.

Any areas of the county that lack the minimum number of drop-off sites defined in the regulation will be served through periodic collection events and/or mail-back programs. Prepaid, preaddressed mailers can also be requested for home bound or disabled residents.

Collectors may offer to participate voluntarily, or may agree to serve in exchange for compensation offered by the drug producers.

Program Education and Evaluation

Drug producers must promote safe storage of medicines and how to use the secure medicine return system to residents, pharmacists, retailers, and health professionals. Promotion must include providing a website, toll-free phone number, and materials to pharmacies, health care facilities, and others.

Pharmacies must provide program materials to customers upon request.

Administration

3020 Rucker Avenue, Suite 306 ■ Everett, WA 98201-3900 ■ fax: 425.339.8706 ■ tel: 425.339.5210
05/02/16

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Local government agencies must help promote the program through their outreach to residents.

Drug producers must report annually on the pounds of medicines collected and evaluate their effectiveness in meeting goals for collection amounts and public awareness. Public awareness surveys must be conducted after the first program year and biennially thereafter.

Secure Medicine Handling & Environmentally Sound Disposal

Medicines must be safely handled and tracked from collection through final disposal in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including security procedures required by the DEA.

Collected medicines must be destroyed at a properly permitted hazardous waste facility. Permission may be granted to use a large municipal waste combustor (e.g. waste-to-energy facility) due to logistical or cost barriers. Alternative disposal technologies that provide superior environmental and health protection may also be approved.

Cost Responsibilities

Producers are responsible for all costs for operating their stewardship plan, including:

- costs of secure drop boxes and collection supplies for drop-off sites.
- costs of prepaid mailers and of any collection events.
- costs of transportation and final disposal of collected medicines
- costs of program promotion and evaluation.
- costs of program administration.
- payment of fees to SHD to reimburse costs of plan review and annual oversight.

Participation by authorized collectors such as pharmacies, hospitals and law enforcement is voluntary.

Producers are not required to pay for staff time at drop-off sites, but may offer compensation to collectors.

Oversight and Enforcement by Snohomish Health District

SHD will oversee the stewardship plan(s) to ensure compliance and safety. SHD oversight authority includes: review and approval of stewardship plan(s), monitoring of program operations, inspections as needed, review of substantive changes to the approved plan(s), and review of annual reports.

The Health Officer may impose changes to a proposed stewardship plan if the producers' proposed plan is rejected several times as not meeting the requirements of the regulation.

The Health Officer may issue a Health Officer's Order, a penalty, and/or suspend any stewardship program that is not operating in compliance with their approved plan.

Costs for SHD services will be recovered through plan review and annual operating fees from producers.

Timing of Program Implementation

Drug producers must submit a proposed stewardship plan no later than 6 months after the proposed regulation is adopted. Producers must begin operation of the stewardship plan no later than 3 months after the plan is approved by SHD.

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