

ACTION ALERT:

OrCRM Supports Secure Medicine Takeback – HB 2645

The Problem

Unused pills in our medicine cabinets create a significant risk for abuse and dependence. We can stem the flow of future dependency by implementing a comprehensive program to safely and conveniently collect leftover prescription opioids in medicine cabinets that fuel abuse and diversion.

Background

Opioid abuse and misuse in Oregon is a public health epidemic. Oregon ranks second among all states in non-medical use of opioids. Over 290,000,000 opioid pills are prescribed every 12 months, almost 70 pills per for every man, woman and child in Oregon. The sheer volume of pills, including those leftover in medicine cabinets, is fueling the opioid crisis.

Over 75% of people who become dependent on opioids report they first started with pills they got from a friend or family member, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.¹ Our youth are also at risk. More than 4 in 10 teens who have misused or abused a prescription drug reporting they took it from their parent's medicine cabinet.²

Some estimate that as many as 1/3 of the pharmaceuticals prescribed are not used – meaning that we are currently adding as many as 30 million leftover opioid pills to our medicine chests *every year* in Oregon alone. According to a recent poll, nearly 50% of parents who reported their kids having been prescribed opioids said they kept leftover pills.³ In fact, results from a national survey conducted in 2015 show people are keeping extra opioid pills and not getting information on how to return unused pain medication for disposal. Data indicate 6 in 10 adults prescribed opioids painkillers have leftover pills with fewer than 7% taking advantage of a take-back program, pharmacy or police department medication collection box.⁴

Law enforcement was the first to recognize the need for safe and secure collection of unused medicine to prevent diversion, misuse and abuse. In Oregon, there are collection boxes in sheriff's offices and police stations. Many local law enforcement agencies also work with communities to sponsor annual take-back events. Pharmacies across Oregon have also realized the need to implement safe and convenient collection of leftover medication. Pharmacies ranging from national chains such as Walgreens – to small pharmacies – like Rinehart's Pharmacy in Wheeler, as well as hospital outpatient pharmacies such as Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria have stepped up and installed medication collection boxes (click on this link to get a list of these pharmacies <http://orcrm.oregonpainguidance.org/rx-disposal/rx-disposal-map/>).

These efforts, however, rely on voluntary participation, leaving many Oregonians without access to safe and convenient medication disposal. Also, Oregonians are unaware of these resources because the lack of funded public education and outreach on safe disposal. A comprehensive program is needed to address these gaps.

The Solution

The Oregon Coalition for Responsible Use of Meds (OrCRM) was among the first organizations to champion pharmacy based disposal after the DEA amended the rules on collection of controlled medication in 2014. OrCRM was founded at the behest of the Governor and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to address the opioid abuse epidemic across Oregon. We are a group of thought leaders and experts that include state agencies, providers and provider groups, health systems, treatment providers, pharmacists, public health professionals, educators, prevention organizations, researchers, community members and business leaders. OrCRM's comprehensive strategy to tackle Oregon's opioid crisis includes better disposal of leftover pills that fuel abuse.

OrCRM has become the strategic planning body for outreach and advocacy on this issue. We believe HB 2645 will help reduce opioid misuse, abuse and overdose through implementation of a comprehensive stewardship program paid by pharmaceutical companies that sell products in Oregon.

HB 2645 requires that pharmaceutical companies selling products in Oregon must create a "stewardship organization" that will collect, transport and dispose of unused medicines. The organization will have to develop a stewardship plan that meets state approved performance requirements that will include:

- convenient collection of all household medicines,
- protocols in compliance with DEA Rule and other applicable regulations,
- environmentally sound disposal,
- promotion and evaluation,
- Deadlines for Stewardship Plan submission and program implementation, and
- enforcement mechanisms.

Costs

The costs, to be borne by the companies making sales in Oregon, have been estimated to be approximately 0.1% of annual medicine sales. These estimates are based on work done by PhRMA and other trade associations and by King County in 2013.

Put another way, program costs are about 1 penny per \$10 prescription of over-the-counter medicines sold.

For more information on the bill, go to:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2645/Introduced>

To view the bill: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Measures/Overview/HB2645>

Supporters

- **Association of Oregon Counties**
- **League of Oregon Cities**
- **Oregon Coalition for the Responsible Use of Meds (OrCRM)**

REFERENCES

¹NSDUH 2014.

²Partnership for a Drug Free America, Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, 2012

³C.S. Mott Children's Hospital Poll- Many Parents Keep Prescription Opioids at Home, May 2016:
<http://mottnpch.org/>

⁴Medication Sharing, Storage, and Disposal Practices for Opioid Medications Among US Adults. JAMA Intern Med. 2016;176(7):1027-1029. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.2543.

[cast as letter to Rep Malstrom]

Dear Representative Malstrom:

I write on behalf of the Oregon Coalition for Responsible Meds to offer our full support for HB 2645 and your efforts to establish effective, pharmacy-based disposal of unused opioid pain medication. Pharmacy-based disposal of unused opioids will be critical to effectively confronting the opioid crisis we are facing in Oregon.

Every year, 290 million opioid pills are prescribed in Oregon – enough for 70 pills for every man, woman and child every 12 months.

As we all know from personal experience, many of these pills go unused – and sit in our medicine cabinets.

These unused pills post a significant risk – and have fueled Oregon’s opioid crisis: ***Over 75% of people who become dependent on opioids report they first started with pills they got from a friend or family member***, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Oregon needs a reliable, safe and convenient system to dispose leftover medication.

The Oregon Coalition for Responsible Use of Meds (OrCRM), Oregon’s statewide taskforce to reduce prescription drug abuse, is a group of thought leaders, experts, consumers and others including providers and provider groups, health systems, treatment providers, pharmacists, public health professionals, educators, prevention organizations, researchers, community members and business leaders. At the direction of the Governor’s Office and in full cooperation with the Oregon Health Authority, OrCRM has hosted Regional Summits throughout Oregon to develop regional Action Plans to reduce opioid abuse, misuse and overdose.

OrCRM has been a champion of safe and convenient disposal at pharmacies after the DEA amended the rules on collection of controlled medication in 2014. Better disposal of leftover medication is one of OrCRM’s four cornerstones to tackling Oregon’s opioid epidemic.

We can stem the flow of future dependency by implementing a comprehensive program to safely and conveniently collect leftover prescription opioids in medicine cabinets that fuel abuse and diversion. We believe HB 2645 will help reduce opioid misuse, abuse and overdose through implementation of a comprehensive stewardship program paid by pharmaceutical companies that sell products in Oregon. OrCRM supports HB 2645 and we encourage our partners to also lend their support of this Bill.

Dwight Holton,
Chair, Oregon Coalition for Responsible Use of Meds
CEO, Lines for Life

