

**Colorado Household Medication Take-Back Program
Report to Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Interim Study Committee
July 20, 2018**

Background

The Colorado Household Medication Take-Back Program (program) was established in HB14-1207 and is codified in state statutes in Section 25-15-328, C.R.S. Rules and regulations governing the program (6 CCR 1010-23) were adopted by the Solid and Hazardous Waste Commission in May 2016. The rules, in large part, mirror DEA rules for the disposal of controlled substances which became effective in October 2014.

Program Operations

Program operations are funded through a \$300,000 annual legislative appropriation.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) executed a contract with Assured Waste Solutions, LLC (Assured Waste), located in Gastonia, North Carolina, in May 2016. The contract has twice been renewed, most recently for Fiscal Year 2019. Assured Waste is a DEA-registered reverse distributor and receives shipment of medications from program collection sites via UPS, stores them in their DEA-compliant vault for no more than 30-days, and transports them for incineration at the Hampton/NASA Steam Plant in Hampton, Virginia. The Lancaster County Resource Recovery Facility, located in Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, is used as a back-up incinerator when the Hampton/NASA facility is shut-down for routine maintenance.

Law enforcement agencies, retail pharmacies, and hospitals/clinics with on-site pharmacies can volunteer to act as medication collectors. If approved by CDPHE, collectors are provided kiosks and all supplies needed for their packaging and shipment of medications to Assured Waste. CDPHE provides collectors with training and documents needed to properly handle and track collected medications. Collectors are allowed to accept prescription medications, including prescribed controlled substances, and over-the-counter medications.

Program Promotion

The program has been branded to the URL, takemededback.org, where the public can find collection locations and lists of accepted and non-accepted items. This URL serves as the disposal landing page for the web site, takemedsseriously.org, which provides broader information on the proper use, storage and disposal of household medications. These websites are maintained by the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention. The program periodically utilizes radio and TV public service announcements along with on-line digital and social media campaigns to increase public awareness. The program is currently participating with the AmeriCorps Community Opioid Response Program and presenting information about proper medication disposal at community meetings. Communities often promote their local collection sites through various media.

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Program Progress

Since the first collection sites were established in October 2016, 115 collection sites covering 56 counties have been enrolled in the program. 64 of the enrolled sites are law enforcement agencies, 15 are retail pharmacies, and 36 are hospitals or clinics. Half of all enrollments occurred in FY2018.

The eight counties still without a program collection site are Archuleta, Baca, Dolores, Huerfano, Kiowa, Lincoln, Mineral, and Park. The program is working with local contacts and the Consortium to establish sites in these counties before the end of calendar year 2018.

The first collection sites were established in October 2016. Through June 2018, 32,097 pounds of medications have been collected. 75% of this amount was collected in FY2018. Collection amounts have been trending upward, with at least 3,000 pounds collected in May 2018 and in June 2018. The top five performing collection sites are the Boulder County Sheriff (2,377 pounds), the Littleton Police Department (2,310 pounds), the Castle Rock Police Department (1,841 pounds), the Denver Health Primary Care Clinic (1,533 pounds), and the Mental Health Center of Denver (1,230 pounds).

Other Collection Programs Operating in the State

There are several other household medication collection sites operating in Colorado that are not part of the state-funded program. Walgreens operates 11 locations and Kaiser-Permanente operates 10. The program is aware of seven law enforcement agencies operating kiosks on their own. Inmar, a DEA-registered reverse distributor, operates kiosks in at least three western slope locations. As the program becomes aware of these other collection sites, they are added to the list of collectors at takemededback.org.