City of Bellingham
Medicine Return Program

Sylvia Graham
October 5th, 2015
Launched in 2010

- Developed protocol
- WA Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission approval
- 5 pharmacies - OTC and prescription medication
- Bellingham Police - narcotics & controlled substances
- Funding
  - EPA grant - 3 yrs
  - City Solid Waste
Protocol

Resident brings in meds.

Pharmacist approves items. Resident places them in bin.

Controlled substances go to Police Dept.

When full, box is sealed for shipment by Clean Harbors for hazardous waste incineration.
### Collection Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lbs.</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>$1,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,723</td>
<td>$2,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>$2,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,561</td>
<td>$2,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,951</td>
<td>$2,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,670</td>
<td>$3,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,460</td>
<td>$14,853</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Certified contractor
  - $1.41/lb transport & destruction
- Start-up cost
  - ~$800/pharmacy
- Compare with mailers
  - $5/envelope
  - *Safeway says “we don’t sell any”*
Accomplishments

- Our protocol adopted by:
  - San Francisco, CA
  - Ferndale, WA
  - Vancouver, WA

  - Hazardous Materials Program Excellence
  - Most Inspiring Member
2013 Survey
133 respondents

Disposal before using the take-back program

- Gave to a friend/relative
- Down the drain
- Saved for later use or disposal someday
- In the trash

# Responses
2013 Survey

99% support from residents (n=133)

100% support from pharmacies (n=4)
What are the biggest benefits to your pharmacy?

“Giving our customers a place to safely dispose of their meds.”

“It is a great service which enhances our standing in this particular community.”

“It provides a community service and makes our members feel like it's OK to get rid of... medications.”
“They are upset about us not accepting controlled substances.”

“...a lot of people don't want to take them to the police department.”

“...helps get unwanted medications out of customers' homes where they have the potential to cause harm.”
Thank you

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