

# Secure Medicine Return

Information for Pharmacies  
February 2018  
Skagit County Public Health



## Overview

The Skagit County Board of Health adopted the Secure Medicine Return ordinance that creates and funds pharmaceutical industry funded comprehensive medicine return system. The ordinance is modeled on regulations already passed by the local boards of health in King, Snohomish, Kitsap, Tacoma-Pierce, Clallam and Whatcom Counties.

## Ordinance Highlights

- **Expand secure medicine disposal options** for Skagit County residents to reduce risks of medicine poisonings and misuse, and reduce pollution from waste pharmaceuticals
- **Improve convenience for residents** by expanding the number of locations and use of mailer bags for unused medicine drop off and disposal, beyond Law Enforcement offices
- **Ensure financial sustainability** through a pharmaceutical industry-financed system

## *What is Pharmaceutical Stewardship?*

The ordinance requires the companies who manufacture medicines – the producers – to develop and pay for a comprehensive medicine return system. This concept is called **pharmaceutical stewardship**.

Pharmaceutical producers can combine their resources and hire a company, or **stewardship organization**, to coordinate the system. Stewardship organizations are required to develop a stewardship plan that meets the required ordinance components. Skagit County Public Health will review the plan and oversee the approved program for safety and compliance.

## More Information

*The Skagit County Board of Health adopted Skagit County Code (SCC) 12.20 Secure Medicine Return on February 21, 2018.*

*Public Health will receive a draft stewardship plan(s) from the pharmaceutical producers or their stewardship organization by August 2018.*

*Public Health will review the plan to ensure it meets the ordinance requirements. The public will also be able to provide written comments during the plan review process.*

*Written comment period for the draft plan(s) will be coming in late Summer 2018.*

**For more information please visit us online at:**

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/medicinereturn>

## How do pharmacies fit in?

Retail pharmacies and clinics or hospitals with an on-site pharmacy can volunteer to host a secure drop box where people drop off unwanted medicine. To participate a pharmacy must:

- Be a licensed pharmacy with the Washington State Pharmacy Assurance Commission
- Amend registration with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to become a collector
- Authorize two employees to maintain keys to the secure drop-box
- Lock the drop box when the site is closed
- Manage and maintain required documentation



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What will it cost to host a drop box?

The costs of running the program are incurred by the pharmaceutical producers. The pharmaceutical industry and stewardship organization will purchase and install the drop box. They are responsible to securely collect, transport, and destroy unused medications. They will give you educational materials on the medicine return program for your customers. The producer must arrange a minimum number of drop boxes throughout the county. Pharmacies can volunteer to participate or negotiate payment for their participation.

## What type of medicine is accepted in the drop boxes?

Most prescription and over-the-counter medicine from the home, including pet medication, is accepted. This includes controlled substances.

Not accepted:

- Vitamins and supplements
- Herbal-based remedies and homeopathic drugs
- Personal care products regulated as both cosmetics and nonprescription drugs
- Empty injector products and medical devices that contain no covered drug
- Schedule I drugs, like marijuana, LSD and heroin

## How do we sign up?

The producers' stewardship organization will contact all pharmacies by June 2018. You can then let them know if you want to participate. Let Public Health know that you are interested in a drop box also.

## I am a retail pharmacy, but don't want to host a drop box. Is that okay?

You are not required to host a drop box. However, if you choose not to participate, we ask that you share educational materials with customers on the secure medicine return program and drop box locations in Skagit County.

## Our pharmacy is a compounding-only pharmacy. Can we participate?

Yes. Any pharmacy licensed with the Washington State Pharmacy Assurance Commission and authorized by the DEA as a collector can participate to host a drop box. The only exception to this is pharmacies run by facilities that handle and administer drugs for their patients. These facilities must follow existing laws regarding business disposal of medications.

## Where can I find more information about the ordinance?

More information is available on our website at <https://www.skagitcounty.net/medicinereturn>

## When does it start?

Pharmaceutical manufacturers or their stewardship group must notify potential collectors (including pharmacies) of the opportunity to have a drop box by June 21, 2018. Secure drop boxes should be operating by the end of 2018.



For more information, contact:  
Britt Pfaff-Dunton  
360-416-1500  
EH@co.skagit.wa.us

Skagit County Public Health  
700 S. 2nd Street, Room 301  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
[www.skagitcounty.net](http://www.skagitcounty.net)