Local Disposal Options for Prescription Medications

Medications used to treat pain, ADHD, Seizures, Anxiety, and sleep disorders are just some of the medications that are dangerous if taken accidentally or illegally. These medications should be disposed of in a way that makes it difficult for other people to take them. There are various ways to simply and safely dispose of drugs through programs available in many communities.

Commonly Available Disposal Programs in Massachusetts: You should discuss with your pharmacist or your provider, the programs available to you through any of these programs listed below.

- ***Drug Take-Back Programs*: Drug take-back programs approved by federal and state agencies are free.** Take-back programs can be found at many drug treatment programs, retail pharmacies, or hospitals/clinics. There are two ways to find a location near you:
  - The federal Drug Enforcement Agency has several drug disposal locations that are available on its website (https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e2s1);
  - Within Massachusetts, there are several safe and secure locations within community pharmacies or local law enforcement, and are available at: http://www.productstewardship.us/page/1051
- ***Prescription Dropbox Locations***: Many local communities also have drop box locations where people can dispose of unwanted, expired, or unused medications in a safe and secure manner. To find a location close to you, please visithttp://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/substance-abuse/prevention/prescription-dropbox-locations.html .
- ***Mail Back Programs***: Patients can use a prepaid and preaddressed packaging to mail back unused medications to be properly and safely destroyed. Please talk to your pharmacist if there is an available program for your prescription.

Disposal Options within the Hospital: This hospital also provides a safe and secure location for disposing of unused and unwanted medications. For more information, please talk to your treating provider or the department you are visiting for details on the location within the hospital:

- Locations at this hospital can be found at ***(insert hospital specific locations, hours, etc.)***

Other Methods: Many people may not be able to use one of the programs listed above because of mobility, inability to leave the house, or if a program is not available in their community. In these circumstances, providers should educate patients/consumers about possible secondary disposal methods, which include:

1. Disposing medications on the following list provided by the FDA, down the sink or toilet*: http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#Flush_List
2. A patient/consumer can also dispose of the unused medication in the trash by covering the medication in an undesirable substance such as kitty litter or coffee grinds, and using an unmarked, sealed container that is neither colorless/clear nor opaque.*

*Please note - Flushing or disposing medications in the trash may negatively affect our environment and our water systems. The best way to dispose of drugs is through take-back programs, mail-back programs, and disposing of medication at dedicated drop off sites in the community. When these programs are not available or accessible by the patient, other secondary methods including flushing the medication down the toilet should be considered.