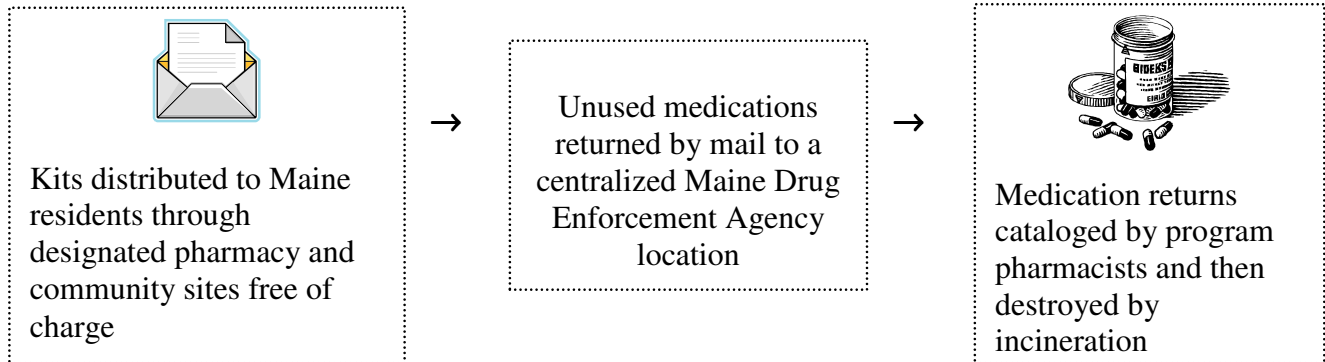


Safe Medicine Disposal for ME Program



The University of Maine Center on Aging has received funding through a Fund for Healthy Maine allocation from the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency to operate Maine's prescription drug-return-by-mail program, the first of its kind in the country.

Program Take-Back Model at a glance:



Why Maine?

- Maine has the oldest population in the nation as measured by median age. Americans age 65 and older account for over one-third of all prescription drugs dispensed, despite making up only about 13% of the national population.
- The state of Maine has previously experienced and documented the consequences of unused drugs remaining in circulation. In 2002, nearly 90% of all drug deaths in Maine were caused by prescription drugs. Maine DEA arrests for prescription drug theft and misuse have increased dramatically to 16% of all arrests in the state. Maine ranks number one in the country in terms of the relationship of pharmaceuticals to violent crime and property crime.

What are the benefits of this model?

Many other areas of the country are considering replicating our model of drug disposal. Here's why:

- Avoids the harmful environmental impacts and health hazards of flushing or disposing of drugs via household trash
- Easy, convenient, and anonymous way of disposing of drugs
- Takes advantage of the security protocols of the U.S. Postal Service mail system
- Accessible to those who live in rural areas and are unable to attend event-based or on-site medicine return programs

- Drugs are returned directly to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency so the program is able to accept controlled substances
- From a social standpoint such a program presents the opportunity to: limit drug related crimes, limit opportunities for drug abuse, and reduce waste related to medical and insurance costs by providing a safe alternative from stockpiling medications in consumer's homes
- The potential environmental benefits include: protecting water and soil supplies from drug contamination and prevention of accidental poisonings of humans, pets, and wildlife

This initiative is a unique collaboration between environmental, drug enforcement, and healthcare officials and puts the University of Maine in the forefront of innovative outreach research. Lessons learned through this program can be used to shape state and national public policy, physician prescribing practices, and health education outreach strategies.

Program Partners:

Program partners include the: University of Maine Center on Aging, United States Environmental Protection Agency, United States Postal Service, Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety, Safe Medicine for Maine, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Rite Aid Pharmacies, Maine Office of Elder Services, Maine Office of Substance Abuse, Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, Maine Office of the Attorney General, Maine Pharmacy Association, Maine RSVP Programs, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, National Council on Patient Information and Education, Miller Drug, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, CVS Pharmacies, Maine Office of Adult Mental Health Services, Maine Medical Association, Northern New England Poison Center, Villanova University Center for the Environment, Maine Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of New England and community organizations and pharmacies throughout Maine.

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