

Press Release – February 16, 2017

 kingcountysecuremedicinereturn.org/press-release-february-16-2017/

2/17/2017

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT:

[Diana Steeble](mailto:dsteeble@prrbiz.com)

206-462-6389

dsteeble@prrbiz.com



King County

February 16, 2017

King County Brings Secure Medicine Return Program to the Region

Program Aims to Decrease the Risk of Drug Abuse, Overdose, and Preventable Poisonings

KING COUNTY, SEATTLE— Drug overdoses have surpassed car crashes as a leading cause of preventable death in King County. Unused, expired, and leftover drugs that accumulate in homes increase the risk of drug abuse, overdose, and preventable poisonings, while unwanted medicines flushed down toilets and sinks or thrown in the trash can end up in the environment. King County has launched a secure medicine return program to reduce these risks.

“We’re making it safer and easier to get unused and expired medication out of medicine cabinets, out of landfills, and out of Puget Sound,” said King County Dow Executive Constantine. “The secured drop-boxes we’re installing throughout King County will reduce fatal overdoses and help stem the growing tide of addiction.”

The program has a collaborative approach to prevention, across communities, government, pharmacies, drug producers, and law enforcement agencies. City of Kenmore Mayor David Baker noted, “This program is protecting our kids and youth from preventable drug abuse, overdoses, and poisonings.”

There are 99 drop-boxes installed and operational, and there are currently 410 drug producers who are participating.

“Opiate and heroin use is an epidemic requiring multiple responses,” said King County Council Chair Joe McDermott. “Because one-third of prescription and over-the-counter medications go unused in King County and too easily can become gateways to illegal use and addiction, I led efforts to create our secure medicine return program. The program provides a safe, secure, and convenient way to dispose of unwanted medicines.”

Residents can take their unwanted medicines to participating pharmacies and law enforcement offices to dispose of the medicines they no longer need—at no cost to the resident. A full list of participating locations can be found [here](#). Mail-back services are also available to residents who are homebound or have limited mobility, and soon another 14 locations will have mail-back envelopes for residents to take home. Each collection site is run by voluntary participants who are choosing to work together to protect the community—at nearly one hundred locations across the county.

“Unwanted medicines in the home put our families and community at risk,” said Dr. Jeff Duchin of Public Health-

Seattle & King County. “Most people who misuse prescription medicines aren’t getting them from drug dealers but from a friend or relative’s medicine cabinet.”

Using a drop-box to dispose of unwanted medicines is safe, convenient, and there is no cost to consumers, either at the time of medicine purchase or return. The program is overseen by Public Health-Seattle & King County and the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, ensuring a successful product stewardship program that reduces risk and enforces approved regulations.

For more information, please visit www.kingcountysecuremedicinereturn.org.