



March 18, 2016

Mayor Eric Garcetti
 Council President Herb Wesson
 City Councilmembers
 200 N. Spring Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

SUBJECT: Support for Resolution# 15-0002-S133 Supporting Safe Med/Needle Disposal

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

The signatories to this letter are in strong support of Los Angeles County’s efforts to craft an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) ordinance for pharmaceuticals and sharps. The people of L.A. County,

including the City of Los Angeles, need a safe, free and convenient take-back system for their unwanted medications and medical sharps. Ensuring easy access to collection sites providing secure and environmentally sound disposal of leftover medicines and sharps will reduce risks of medicine abuse and poisonings, help prevent dangerous and costly needle sticks, and protect our waterways and environment. We strongly support the language of the 1/5/2016 draft “Pharmaceutical and Sharps Collection and Disposal Stewardship Ordinance”, and urge the county to adopt this legislation.

We especially support the following strengths of the 1/5/2016 draft ordinance.

1. **Residents throughout the county will have access to a secure collection system** for all unwanted medications and sharps used in the home, with convenient collection sites distributed throughout the county, as well as options for prepaid mailers upon request.
2. **All unwanted medications used in homes, for people and pets, will be accepted**, both prescription and over-the-counter, and including prescription drugs that are controlled substances.
3. **Manufacturers of medicines and sharps have the primary responsibility for secure collection and safe disposal of their products as a cost of doing business.** Visible fees cannot be charged to consumers at point of purchase or at disposal. This approach recognizes that industry has a key role in managing the society impacts and end-of-life consequences of their products, and that externalizing all the costs onto other stakeholders and local governments is not fair or sustainable. Manufacturers can include the modest cost of a safe take-back program – a penny for every \$10 prescribed as stipulated in the Alameda Supreme Court case – in the cost of medicines and sharps without significantly impacting consumers.
4. **Security protections are required** that will give consumers confidence that the take-back system for their leftover medications and sharps is safe and confidential.
5. **Manufacturers must promote the stewardship program to residents and the health care community, and expressly discourage the stockpiling of unwanted pharmaceuticals/sharps and discourage disposal into the trash or by flushing into a sewer.**
6. **The ordinance requires secure handling and environmentally sound disposal of all collected pharmaceuticals and sharps** in compliance with all relevant state and federal regulations.
7. **The stewardship plan review process includes public comment opportunities** and gives the county the option of forming a technical advisory committee to assist with plan review to ensure local stakeholders are heard in the planning process.
8. **The ordinance has a clear definition for “Responsible Steward” that focuses responsibility on the manufacturer of the medicine or sharp**, and also clearly defines who the county can hold responsible as the steward if the manufacturer cannot be identified.

We appreciate the County’s transparent process for stakeholder input during the development of this ordinance and have seen members of the City staff in attendance as well. County staff have done an excellent job in crafting this policy and in addressing stakeholder comments and we believe this ordinance is the best available and learned lessons from the other counties who have passed these ordinances including Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Marin, and Santa Cruz in CA and King County Washington.

We commend Los Angeles County for taking action to address the serious problems faced by families and communities due to leftover pharmaceuticals and sharps. Pharmaceutical manufacturers already provide medicine take-back programs in other countries, including France, Spain, Mexico, Brazil and most provinces in Canada and for sharps in the Canadian province of Ontario. We urge the county to enact this EPR stewardship ordinance to provide this key public health and environment health service to residents as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

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