

# Shareholders Challenge Pharmaceutical Industry To Take Back Unused Drugs

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"Shareholders are concerned that the U.S. pharmaceutical industry does not have a policy or plan for collection and processing of expired and unused prescription medications," said Conrad MacKerron, Senior Vice President at As You Sow, which organized the corporate engagement effort.

The Drug Enforcement Administration has organized periodic National Take-Back Days for medicines, and collected more than 5 million pounds of medications with just 10 events. The Obama Administration's National Drug Control Strategy calls for establishment of permanent disposal programs in communities.

As least one company has taken action. Walgreens, the largest U.S. pharmacy chain, recently [announced](#) it will install drug disposal kiosks in 500 drugstores in 39 states and Washington, D.C. as part of a broader effort to counter drug abuse, but this represents just 1% of all pharmacies.

"Shareholders expect companies that put drugs on the market with the potential for abuse to develop policies and practices to provide easy access for convenient disposal of unused drugs at the community level to keep them out of harm's way," said Cathy Rowan, Director, Socially Responsible Investments for Trinity Health, a national not-for profit health system operating in 21 states.

Shareholders sent letters to AbbVie Inc., Becton Dickenson & Co., GlaxoSmithKline, Roche Holding AG, Johnson & Johnson, Merck & Co., Novartis International AG, Novo Nordisk, Pfizer Inc., and Sanofi S.A. In addition, As You Sow has filed shareholder resolutions with [AbbVie](#), [Johnson & Johnson](#) and [Merck & Co.](#), asking for policies clarifying their positions on responsibility for take back programs.

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