

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Bipartisan Support For New ‘Pharmacy Take-Back’ Law

Hofstein: Convenient Drop-Off Locations Can Help Curb Drug Abuse Among Youth & Others, Keep Our Waterways Safer

New City, NY (Feb. 17, 2017) – We’ve all left unused, unwanted and even expired prescriptions in our medicine cabinets and many of us have disposed of medication by flushing them down the toilet or throwing them into the garbage.

Rockland County Legislators agree there are good reasons for changing these habits and in a bipartisan action, have voted 15-0 to pass a new law called the Pharmacy Take-Back Act. Legislator Lon M. Hofstein (R-New City) introduced the measure.

The law is meant to help keep unused drugs out of our waterways and to prevent drugs from ending up in the hands of young people and others who want to use them for recreational and illegal purposes, Hofstein said.

“There are young people who attend ‘Skittles parties,’ where pills for assorted medical conditions are dumped into a large bowl,” Hofstein said. “Imagine your teenager or anyone else for that matter, ingesting a pill that was intended for a person with a heart condition, or a thyroid irregularity or a whole host of other medical conditions. The consequences of using these substances in a recreational manner could be deadly.

“It is not unusual for prescription drugs such as opioid painkillers to be left in medicine cabinets where anyone can access them,” Hofstein said. “This can lead to a dangerous situation.”

The new law applies to manufacturers whose drugs are sold or distributed in Rockland and to retailers who sell the drugs in the county. The law turns your local pharmacy into a convenient location for consumers to safely dispose of unused medications.

The new law will be administered by the Rockland County Department of Consumer Protection and fines of up to \$1,000 per day can be leveled for non-compliance.

Manufacturers and retailers are required to create and operate a Product Stewardship Program that must be approved by the Consumer Protection Department in consultation with the Rockland County Department of Health.

The program must include details about how it will be operated, including how medications will be disposed of and background checks on the individuals who handle the collections. An educational component requires signs about the program near the retail establishment's entrance, advertising to make people aware of the program, a website publicizing collections and a toll-free telephone number for consumers so they can find nearby collection locations.

Initial plans must be submitted by April 1, but written extensions can be requested.

“This law has the potential to keep prescription drugs out of the hands of children, teens and potential abusers,” Hofstein said. “By simply providing convenient collection locations, we could dramatically curb abuse while also protecting our environment.”

Some sources:

http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/pharmawater_site/day1_01.html

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/only-half-of-drugs-removed-by-sewage-treatment/>

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186188.htm>

<https://www.epa.gov/wqc/contaminants-emerging-concern-including-pharmaceuticals-and-personal-care-products>

http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/drugs-in-the-water

http://e360.yale.edu/features/as_pharmaceutical_use_soars_drugs_taint_water_and_wildlife

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