



King County

King County Board of Health

Staff Report

Agenda item No: 10

BOH R&R No: 21-02

Date: November 18, 2021

Prepared by: Taylor Watson

Subject

R&R 21-02 would suspend the King County Secure Medicine Return program in accordance with the transition of the program to under the authority of the Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program.

Summary

King County's Secure Medicine Return Program, established in 2013 to safely collect and dispose of unwanted household medicines, will fully transfer to the Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program (WAC 246-480-040) on November 21, 2021. This staff report summarizes King County Secure Medicine Return Program, its transfer to the Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program and requested changes to the King County Board of Health code.

King County Secure Medicine Return Program

In June 2013, the King County Board of Health (BOH) passed Rules & Regulation 13-03, creating BOH Code Chapter 11.50 to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare from improper handling and disposal of unwanted medicines. The regulations required an industry-funded product stewardship program to collect and safely dispose of unwanted household medicines from people living in King County. Public Health-Seattle & King County and the Hazardous Waste Management Program ensured industry compliance and program safety as required under Secure Medicine Return Regulations. This program has actively operated in King County since 2017. The King County program included 430 participating drug producers, operated nearly 200 collection locations, and has cumulatively collected over 115 tons of unwanted medicines from people living in King County.

Status of Safe Medicine Disposal in King County

Through King County's Secure Medicine Return Program, residents safely disposed of the medicines stored at home that are no longer needed at a drop-box conveniently located and

equitably distributed throughout the County. A total of 115.5 tons of medicines were safely collected and disposed under King County's program January 8, 2017-July 31, 2021.¹

Participating pharmacies and law enforcement offices voluntarily hosting a drop-box as part of the King County Secure Medicine Return Program will continue to operate under the statewide program. Currently, there are 198 drop-box locations available to all people living in King County that will be transferred from the county to the statewide program. The stewardship plan operator approved in King County, MED-Project, is also approved to operate the statewide program and will provide continuity in service to people living in the county, including the same recognizable drop-box and educational materials. Using this service will continue at no cost to people living in King County.

Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program

On June 7, 2018 Washington State Legislation passed HB 1047 creating a Drug Take-Back Program for all counties in Washington State. Effective August 1, 2019, Washington State Department of Health regulations required an industry-funded product stewardship program to collect and dispose of unwanted household medicines from residents in each county of Washington State. The State's medicine collection program is currently operational in Washington State counties without an established county-operated medicine collection program.

Transfer of King County Secure Medicine Return to the Washington State Department of Health

On November 21, 2021 King County Secure Medicine Return will cease implementation and enforcement of the King County Board of Health Secure Medicine Return Regulations and will fully transfer its Secure Medicine Return Program to Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program. When transferred, regulatory compliance and operations oversight of medicine collection and disposal in King County will become the responsibility of the State Department of Health. During the transition to the State's medicine collection program, Public Health Seattle & King County and the Hazardous Waste Management Program will provide information as needed in support of the transition.

The Washington State Department of Health Drug Take-Back Program is authorized to operate until its scheduled program termination date of January 1, 2029 (RCW 43.131.423).

Request to Update King County Board of Health Code

An update to the King County Board of Health Code is requested by The Hazardous Waste Program to reflect the transfer of medicine return responsibilities to the State. Given that the state program is currently legislated to end in 2029, the Program recommends suspending the local authorization rather than repealing it entirely. R&R 21-02 would add language to suspend the

¹ Data for August-December 2021 not currently available.

existing chapter of BOH Code pertaining to secure medicine return in the event the state ceases to provide that service. R&R 21-02, as drafted would trigger the resurrection of the King County secure medicine return program as it was previously operated and funded by drug manufacturers in the event the Washington Department of Health ceases to provide this service.