



Legislation Text

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Clerk 04/26/2021

A MOTION relating to secure medicine return in King County and a one-week council communications campaign to increase awareness about the availability of the secure medicine return mail back program.

WHEREAS, in June 2013 the King County board of health passed Rule and Regulation BOH 13-03 establishing permanent secure medicine return program in an effort to protect and preserve the public health of King County residents by getting excess prescription opioids and other medications out of the household so they cannot be misused, and

WHEREAS, King County partners including the hazardous waste management program, the department of community and human services, public health - Seattle & King County and the Washington Poison Center collaborated on the "Don't Hang on to Meds" campaign, and

WHEREAS, since 2013, King County has exceeded the number of required take-back locations than required by law, and

WHEREAS, as a result, there are one hundred ninety-four free and confidential medicine return drop-box locations available in King County that accept unwanted medicines from households in easily accessible locations such as participating retail and in-store pharmacies, clinic and hospital pharmacies and law enforcement offices, and

WHEREAS, according to the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and eighty studies on the topic, social isolation and loneliness, such as that caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic, significantly increase the risk of depression and anxiety in previously healthy

children and adolescents, and

WHEREAS, a 2014 study done by the University of Southern California of four hundred seventy-six adolescents, with the mean age of fourteen years old, concluded that depression levels directly associated with an increased likelihood of a lifetime use of inhalants, prescription pain killers and many other substances, and

WHEREAS, in a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in June 2020, 13.3 percent of respondents reported having started or increased their substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, with the increase in substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic the secure medicine return program, including the mail-back envelope option, is more relevant than ever in King County, and

WHEREAS, in November 2021 the Washington state Department of Health will assume control of the secure medicine return program and make it available statewide, and

WHEREAS, the King County council expresses pride in the work of the King County hazardous waste management program, public health - Seattle & King County, and all the departments that have contributed to the highly successful secure medicine return program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. King County council central communications and external relations staff are requested to develop a communications campaign to:

1. Raise awareness of the 1-844-633-7765 phone number by which residents can request a mail-back envelope to securely return medicines; and

2. The upcoming transition of the King County Secure Medicine Return program to the Washington state Department of Health the fall of 2021.

B. Council central communications and external relations staff are requested to collaborate with the King County hazardous waste management program and public health - Seattle & King County to ensure messaging is consistent with current strategies around the secure medicine return program and the roles and

responsibilities of the county, state and industry. The campaign shall include at a minimum:

1. A press strategy to raise awareness of the program; and
2. Materials for councilmembers to share on social media and in constituent emails newsletters.

C. Councilmembers may voluntarily communicate the information about access

to mail-back envelopes in order to increase awareness about secure medicine return in King County.