



## *Iowa's medication disposal program utilizing community pharmacies*

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **How did the *TakeAway* Environmental Return System program come into being?**

Legislation passed in 2009 called for the creation of an Iowa community pharmacy-based "pharmaceutical collection and disposal pilot program."

#### **What is the *TakeAway* program trying to accomplish?**

Current pharmaceutical disposal practices contribute to contaminated water supplies and drug diversion. The *TakeAway* program aims to reverse this trend by utilizing community pharmacies to provide a safe, easy way to dispose of unwanted and expired medications.

#### **Who gets to participate?**

The grant funding for the program will allow approximately 600 Iowa community pharmacies to participate. All pharmacies will be contacted with a 'Request to Participate.'

#### **What materials will my pharmacy receive upon signing up to participate in the *TakeAway* program?**

- Two 20 Gallon *TakeAway* Systems (cardboard receptacles)
- Marketing materials, including: counter display, window cling, fliers, bag stuffers, and press releases for local media, physicians and city staff.
- Business plan for sustaining the *TakeAway* program in your pharmacy

#### **How does the *TakeAway* Environmental Return System work?**

Participating pharmacies will receive two 20 gallon *TakeAway* Systems—cardboard boxes specially designed as pharmaceutical waste receptacles. Patients and consumers bring in their unwanted or expired medications and hand them over to the pharmacist, who will insert them into the *TakeAway* System kept behind the counter. When the box is full the pharmacist seals it and hands it off to a UPS carrier. The *TakeAway* System is pre-paid and pre-addressed for the Sharps incineration facility in Carthage, Texas, where incineration is witnessed by law enforcement.

#### **What items can be accepted into the *TakeAway* return system for disposal?**

Any pharmaceutical product, prescription or OTC, can be accepted for disposal, EXCLUDING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES. Medications in any dosage form and any type of packaging are allowed, provided the medications are not controlled substances.

**How long has Sharps treatment facility been in use?**

Sharps has a permitted facility, in use for 15 years. The facility is monitored and permitted to handle this waste in a responsible and environmentally sound manner.

**Does the incineration process used by Sharps convert waste into energy?**

Yes. Electricity is generated and harnessed for use from the incineration process.

**What are the upfront costs to my pharmacy?**

\$0. There is no cost to pharmacies to begin participating in the *TakeAway* pilot program.

**How long will the *TakeAway* pharmaceutical disposal program last?**

The *TakeAway* pilot program funds two 20 gallon *TakeAway* systems for each participating pharmacy. Pharmacies that participate in the pilot program will be expected to continue offering *TakeAway* disposal services to their community. For a successful program, the services must be sustained beyond the initial funding.

**Will *TakeAway* systems be automatically reordered for participating pharmacies?**

No. Pharmacies must order additional *TakeAway* Systems on their own accord.

**How do I order additional *TakeAway* return systems?**

*TakeAway* systems (10 and 20 gallon boxes, envelopes) can be purchased at IPA's website: [www.iarx.org](http://www.iarx.org).

**Are there are *TakeAway* products other than the 20 gallon *TakeAway* boxes?**

Yes. A 10 gallon *TakeAway* system is available as well as padded envelopes (9"x12") which pharmacies can sell to patients, who will fill them with medications from home, and mail directly to Sharps Compliance, Inc for incineration. Both products are pre-addressed and have pre-paid return shipping.

**How much do additional *TakeAway* systems cost?**

A 20 gallon *TakeAway* system costs \$130, which includes fees for assured waste-to-energy incineration as well as shipping and handling to and from your pharmacy.

**How can these ongoing costs be offset?**

IPA recognizes that sustaining a successful community pharmacy-based *TakeAway* program is heavily contingent on keeping it cost neutral for participating pharmacies. A business plan developed by Sharps Compliance, Inc. is included with the free start-up materials, which offers several suggestions for building a business model around the *TakeAway* pharmaceutical disposal services. These suggestions include implementing a disposal fee based on any number of parameters such as volume, weight, or quantity. In addition, participating pharmacies will benefit financially from offering the unique services of the *TakeAway* program through increased foot traffic in your pharmacy.

**Can I track *TakeAway* return system shipments through UPS?**

Yes. Not only are filled *TakeAway* systems able to be tracked during return shipment to Texas, but additional *TakeAway* system purchases can be tracked as they are shipped to your pharmacy.