



The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

*Building a safer, healthier community by preventing
and treating alcoholism and drug abuse*

May 14, 2015

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

To: County Board of Supervisors

From: The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

Subject: Safe Drug Disposal

We understand that on May 19th the County Board of Supervisors will hear a report on the public health and safety risks of the accumulation of leftover prescription drugs in household medicine cabinets and the importance of convenient drug collection programs to guard against drug abuse. The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse urges the Supervisors to pursue convenient, sustainable, and reliable means for safe drug disposal. The demand for safe drug disposal sites across the county far exceeds the capacity of our existing Operation Medicine Cabinet program, and new federal regulations will further diminish disposal options.

We are particularly concerned about the incidence of prescription drug abuse among young people in our community. In the most recent *California Healthy Kids Survey*, nearly one out of five 11th graders in the county reported having used prescription pain killers or sedatives, or diet pills or other stimulants to “get high” or for reasons other than those prescribed. The percentage of individuals in treatment for whom prescription drugs are the primary drug of choice have increased over 100% from 2008 to 2010. According to national data, 70% of people who abuse prescription pain relievers obtain them from friends or relatives. The accumulation of unused household medication increases the opportunity for misuse and abuse of these addictive substances.

As you know, CADA is the administrative agency for the Santa Barbara Fighting Back coalition, which brings together community leaders on a monthly basis to address emerging issues of concern to our community related to alcohol and drug abuse. Because of our concern about prescription drug disposal, in April we invited Erin Weber, District Representative for Supervisor Doreen Farr, to present their research on this issue to the Fighting Back Steering Committee. The Steering Committee (see attached roster) was very supportive of the exploration of more sustainable options for safe drug disposal, including an Extended Producer Responsibility model.

Sincerely,

Ed Stonefelt,
President and CEO

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