

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOL & DRUG PROBLEMS
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May 15, 2015

Chair, Janet Wolf
And Members of the Board of Supervisors
 County of Santa Barbara
 105 E. Anapamu Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Support for Safe Drug Disposal

Dear Board of Supervisors:

The purpose of this letter is to express our support for a better method of safely disposing of unused prescription drugs. The Advisory Board on Alcohol and Other Drug Problems supports Supervisor Doreen Farr's efforts to address this problem.

The amount of unused medications found in American households is becoming an increasing problem. Proper disposal is critical to the safety of our community traditional modes of disposal are flushed or thrown in the garbage. Both methods are a serious threat to our ground water and oceans. Water analysis is beginning to show the presence of these dangerous chemicals in our environment. These medications can also fall into improper hands with serious side effects or death.

The Advisory Board, the County Sheriff's Department, and County Public Works have traditionally worked together on forums to educate the public. The Sheriff's Department has maintained and provided receptacles of proper disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medications. Also we have successfully participated in the semiannual Prescription Drug Take-Back Day.

The cost to run these programs has ultimately become the burden of the local taxpayers. The Sheriff's department supports the expensive procedures financially. The processes for disposing are to secure, transport and arrange proper incineration of these medicines. At the state level, Hannah Beth Jackson has presented bills to place responsibility and costs of discarding unwanted

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medications to Pharmaceutical Companies. The pharmaceutical industry defeated this bill in committee.

Now that the DEA has stopped their support for the take back campaign and increased the security and regulatory burden for proper disposal, The Advisory Board is concerned that the momentum of the program could be lost.

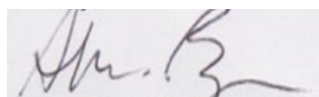
The Advisory Board is supportive of pharmacies hosting drop-off bins for residents to dispose of their unused drugs. Some local pharmacy owners are interesting in hosting a disposal drop-off bin in their locations. The board is concerned about the new DEA security monitoring requirements and the impact this will have on our current program, which is heavily used by residents.

This will be the first year in quite some time that these forums and the biannual take backs will not occur. Without DEA support of take back events, this burden of collecting medication will fall on the county.

As Supervisor Farr's resolution evolves, please give it your attention as it could reduce the burden on county staff and taxpayers for safely disposing of these dangerous prescription drugs that are such a threat to the entire community.

The Advisory Board has been interested in the issue of proper prescription drug disposal for many years and is appreciative of your Board's consideration of a more reliable program for residents. We look forward to collaborating with the County on this critically important issue in the future.

Sincerely,



Sharon Byrne, Chair
County of Santa Barbara Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Problems
1st District Appointee

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Director
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