

Session: EPR for Batteries, Sharps, and Pharmaceuticals

Presentation: San Francisco's Safe Medicine Disposal Pilot Program

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- Home-generated expired or unwanted medicine is an atypical waste stream.
 - Medicine can be harmful to the environment or human health like hazardous waste, and medicine is tightly regulated like hazardous waste, but public safety concerns over substance abuse and accidental poisoning imply a need for immediate disposal. Additionally, medicine has a uniquely unpredictable generation rate since it is prescribed by a third party and the amount requiring disposal depends on patient compliance. Finally, commonly promoted source reduction efforts do not apply.
 - These characteristics make medicine challenging for local governments to manage.
- Various medicine collection methods utilized in San Francisco all proved to be unsustainable.
 - San Francisco collected medicine at its permanent Household Hazardous Waste facility (1990-2005), hosted temporary collection events (2006), coordinated a mail-back program (2009-2011), and continues to host the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) semi-annual one-day take-back events (beginning in 2010).
 - These methods are not sustainable disposal solutions.
- "Transitional extended producer responsibility (EPR)" at the local level is an effective way to address this challenge.
 - In 2010, leadership by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors resulted in proposed mandatory EPR legislation, which successfully garnered the attention of the pharmaceutical industry.
 - The threat of mandatory EPR legislation yielded a voluntary collaborative solution: San Francisco's Safe Medicine Disposal Pilot Program (Pilot Program), which launched April 2012.
 - This "transitional EPR" approach is partially funded by the Pharmaceutical Researchers and Manufacturers of America (\$225K provided/committed) and Genentech (\$10K provided).
 - Using this funding, San Francisco developed a take-back network where residents can return medicine to 24 locations. The take-back network was designed based on CalRecycle's model guidelines for home-generated pharmaceutical waste collection and disposal.
 - San Francisco has collected more than 12 tons of medicine from residents to date through the Pilot Program.
 - The Pilot Program effectively reduces the environmental and public health risks associated with improper disposal, as confirmed by the San Francisco Medicine Waste Characterization Study (available for download at the link below).
- The Pilot Program makes the case for action in other jurisdictions, including statewide action.
 - San Francisco's local efforts are just a drop in the bucket of a much larger public safety and environmental health issue. Ideally, similar pharmaceutical waste collection programs would be industry-funded in every jurisdiction.
 - State Senator Hanabeth Jackson is the author of SB727, a mandatory EPR bill that is currently in the California Legislature. The City and County of San Francisco is a co-sponsor of this bill.

RESOURCES:

San Francisco's Safe Medicine Disposal Pilot Program website: www.sfenvironment.org/medicinedisposal

San Francisco Safe Medicine Disposal Pilot Program Update (Dec 2012):

<http://www.sfenvironment.org/download/safe-medicine-disposal-pilot-program-update>

San Francisco Medicine Waste Characterization Study: <http://www.sfenvironment.org/download/san-francisco-medicine-waste-characterization-study>

Any further questions related to program administration: Contact Ryan Jackson with the San Francisco Department of the Environment at ryan.c.jackson@sfgov.org or (415) 355-3757.

Any further questions related to supporting SB727: Contact Heidi Sanborn with the California Product Stewardship Council at heidi@calpsc.org.