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April 14, 2016

Snohomish Health District
Attn: Pharmaceutical Stewardship Comments
3020 Rucker Ave, Suite 306
Everett, WA 98201

To the Snohomish County Board of Health:

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) strongly supports Snohomish County's proposal to continue drug take-back programs through a pharmaceutical stewardship policy. Such legislation provides proper disposal options for unwanted and expired pharmaceuticals—both controlled and uncontrolled substances—thus offering County residents a convenient way to safely dispose of unused medications.

Mounting evidence demonstrates the need for safe and secure disposal options for pharmaceuticals that match the convenience of purchasing them. Drugs improperly stored in the home or disposed in the trash may end up in the hands of children, teenagers, and potential abusers. A lack of safe disposal options contributes to the national drug abuse epidemic that is now the leading cause of injury death in the U.S., ahead of car accidents. Moreover, when flushed or thrown away, many pharmaceuticals end up in waterways, causing harm to the ecosystem and potentially affecting sources of drinking water.

Over 92 laws in the U.S. require producers to finance and manage the collection of 12 types of consumer products, including electronics, paint, thermostats, carpet, mattresses, fluorescent lamps, and batteries. Producer-financed programs save taxpayers money, fairly incorporate the true cost of managing these products in the purchase price, and provide a direct financial incentive to pharmaceutical companies to reduce unnecessary prescriptions. This financing mechanism is a key element to the sustainability and success of take-back programs.

Pharmaceutical collection programs are considered the safest, most effective drug disposal solution by state, local, and federal government agencies, including a wide coalition of stakeholders in Washington state involved in the [Take Back Your Meds](#) organization. Unfortunately, the pharmaceutical industry continues to heavily promote trash disposal, a discrepancy that leads to public confusion and misinformation. Passing this ordinance would ensure that the industry promotes the safest solution.

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Currently, seven local jurisdictions and one state have passed a law or provision similar to the proposed ordinance in Snohomish County, and many state and local governments around the country are introducing similar bills. **Government officials in these jurisdictions, including Alameda County, have reported that the new take-back programs established through their laws are making great progress towards full implementation.** This success comes despite opposition from the pharmaceutical industry. Snohomish County has the chance to stand among these leaders in taking this important step to prevent drug-related death and injury, and reduce water contamination.

We commend the Board of Health on pursuing these critical policy goals, and offer PSI's technical assistance and support on these efforts moving forward.

Thank you for your strong leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,

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