

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

Title: Disposal Instructions for Unused Medications  
 Introduced by: Brent Oldham for the Medical Student Section  
 Original Author: Amy Cox  
 Referred to: Reference Committee E  
 House Action: **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

---

Whereas, two out of three dispensed medications are unused<sup>1</sup> and remain in patients’ homes, and

Whereas, improper disposal of medications in sewage systems can contaminate water supplies and pollute the environment leading to further public health risks<sup>2</sup>, and

Whereas, pharmacies may accept unused medications, however, patients do not always possess this knowledge of proper disposal of unused medications<sup>3</sup>, and

Whereas, unused medications can be abused by those for whom the prescription is not intended<sup>4</sup>, and

Whereas, unused medications can contribute to the development of opioid addictions and other hazards upon ingestion outside of physician guidelines; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That MSMS work with pharmacies and other relevant stakeholders to advocate that medication disposal instructions be included with all prescriptions; and be it further

RESOLVED: That MSMS encourage prescribers to inform patients about the importance of proper disposal of unused medications, as well as the dangers of sharing medications with friends and family.

---

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: \$25,000 or more as this resolution directs MSMS to engage in legislative advocacy and education outreach.

**Relevant MSMS Policy:**

Disposal of Pharmaceuticals

MSMS believes that all pharmacies that dispense medications should “take back” unused and/or expired pharmaceuticals and drugs and subsequently provide for the disposal of such medications per the most current standard of proper disposal. (Res28-17)

**Relevant AMA Policy:**

Proper Disposal of Unused Prescription and Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs H-135.936

1. Our AMA supports initiatives designed to promote and facilitate the safe and appropriate disposal of unused medications. 2. Our AMA will work with other national organizations and associations to inform, encourage, support and guide hospitals, clinics, retail pharmacies, and narcotic treatment programs in modifying their US Drug Enforcement Administration registrations to become authorized medication collectors and operate collection receptacles at their registered locations. 3. Our AMA will work with other appropriate organizations to develop a voluntary mechanism to accept non-controlled medication for appropriate disposal or recycling.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Law A V, Sakharkar P, Zargarzadeh A, et al. Taking stock of medication wastage: Unused medications in US households. *Res Social Adm Pharm.* 2015;11(4):571-578. doi:10.1016/j.sapharm.2014.10.003
- <sup>2</sup> Vatovec C, Van Wagoner E, Evans C. Investigating sources of pharmaceutical pollution: Survey of over-the-counter and prescription medication purchasing, use, and disposal practices among university students. *J Environ Manage.* 2017;198(Pt 1):348-352. doi:10.1016/j.jenvman.2017.04.101
- <sup>3</sup> Paut Kusturica M, Tomas A, Sabo A. Disposal of Unused Drugs: Knowledge and Behavior Among People Around the World. *Rev Environ Contam Toxicol.* 2016;240:71-104. doi:10.1007/398\_2016\_3
- <sup>4</sup> Lewis ET, Cucciare MA, Trafton JA. What do patients do with unused opioid medications? *Clin J Pain.* 2014;30(8):654-662. doi:10.1097/01.ajp.0000435447.96642.f4