



**City of Long Beach**  
*Working Together to Serve*

**Memorandum**  
**Councilmember Al Austin**  
*Eighth District*

**Date:** April 17, 2018

**To:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Councilmember Al Austin, Eighth District **AA**  
Councilmember Daryl Supernaw, Fourth District **DS**  
Councilmember Dee Andrews, Sixth District **DA**

**Subject:** Resolution in support of Prescription Drug Safe Disposal

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**Request the City Attorney to draft a resolution in support of the Drug Enforcement Agency's semi-annual national prescription drug take back events and supporting the availability and use of prescription drug drop-boxes, in multiple languages, across the City.**

**BACKGROUND:**

The safe disposal of unused or expired prescription drugs, including opioid pain relievers, reduces the risk of nonmedical use that might lead to drug abuse. The misuse of and addiction to opioids is a serious national crisis according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The National Survey on Drug Use found that more than 54.4 million people in the United States had misused prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons in 2014. Los Angeles County coroner data shows that prescription opioids were involved in about 60% of all drug related deaths from 2006 to 2012 in LA County. Cambodian Association of America conducted a survey in 2017 and found that 45% of Long Beach residents reported that it is "not difficult" for youth living in Long Beach to get prescription drugs not prescribed to them. 49% of Long Beach residents reported they did not know that the City has disposal locations to drop-off unused prescription drugs.

Medications flushed down the toilet or in drains pass through the sewer system and eventually enter our oceans and water systems which can lead to increased bacterial resistance to antibiotics and interference with growth and reproduction in aquatic organisms. In order to minimize the potential negative and irreversible impacts to our oceans and waterways, it is important that we discourage the disposal of waste medications in the sewer. A critical component of a comprehensive public health approach to addressing drug abuse is the safe disposal of unused prescription drugs.

On Saturday, April 28, 2018, Long Beach Police Department in conjunction with Long Beach Memorial Medical Center is hosting a Take Back Pharmacy event. The event collects expired pharmaceutical drugs that can be abused by youth and harmful to waterways if not properly disposed.

South Bay Communities Creating Change, a coalition of substance abuse prevention agencies located in the South Bay, has launched a new effort to enhance safe prescription drug disposal efforts through increasing the availability of prescription drug drop-boxes in multiple languages, community education and prescription drug take back events.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact with this recommendation.

## SAMPLE RESOLUTION

### Prescription Drug Safe Disposal Resolution

A RESOLUTION expressing the City's support for the Drug Enforcement Agency's semi-annual national prescription drug take back events and supporting the availability and use of prescription drug drop-boxes across the City. Safe disposal of unused or expired prescription drugs, including controlled substances such as opioid pain relievers, reduces the risk of nonmedical use that might lead to drug abuse.

WHEREAS, in 2014, the results of the National Survey on Drug Use found that more than 54.4 million people in the United States had misused prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles County coroner data shows that prescription opioids were involved in about 60% of all drug related deaths from 2006 to 2012 in LA County; and

WHEREAS, 45% of Long Beach residents reported that it is "not difficult" for youth living in Long Beach to get prescription drugs not prescribed to them.<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, Medications flushed down the toilet or in drains pass through the sewer system and eventually enter our oceans and water systems. Which could lead to increased bacterial resistance to antibiotics and interference with growth and reproduction in aquatic organisms; and

WHEREAS in order to minimize the potential negative and irreversible impacts to our oceans and waterways, it is important that we limit the disposal of waste medications to the sewer;<sup>2</sup> and

WHEREAS, one component of a comprehensive public health approach to addressing drug abuse is the safe disposal of unused prescription drugs, including controlled substances; and

WHEREAS, 49% of Long Beach residents reported they did NOT know that the City has disposal locations to drop-off unused prescription drugs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cambodian Association of America's "Public Opinion Survey," completed by 120 community members ages 12 to 85 in 2017.

<sup>2</sup>The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works "No Drugs Down the Drain" Retrieved from [www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org/No\\_Drug/glossary.asp](http://www.nodrugsdownthedrain.org/No_Drug/glossary.asp)

<sup>3</sup>Cambodian Association of America's "Public Opinion Survey," completed by 120 community members ages 12 to 85 in 2017.

WHEREAS, per an October 2014 U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency rule, police departments and pharmacies may now provide safe disposal boxes for controlled substances like OxyContin, Vicodin, Valium, and Ritalin; and

WHEREAS, South Bay Communities Creating Change, a coalition of substance abuse prevention agencies located in the South Bay, has launched a new effort to enhance safe prescription drug disposal efforts through community education and outreach;

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Long Beach resolves as follows:

Section 1. The City Council supports the Drug Enforcement Agency's semi-annual national prescription drug take back events and other community based drug prevention education awareness activities.

Section 2. The City Council requests that the City of Long Beach support the availability and use of prescription drug drop-boxes for the safe disposal of unused and expired prescription drugs.

Section 3. The City Council asks that community agencies help ensure that drop-box disposal programs in the city are designed to be regionally accessible and language appropriate for limited English speaking residents.