



Legislation Text

File #: 15-0829, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to direct the Long Beach Health and Human Services Department, in partnership with the Police Department and other applicable departments, to create a citywide prescription drug stewardship program.

Currently, Long Beach has no standing program that allows for the disposal of unwanted or unused prescription drugs and personal-use medical sharps, and only participates in the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) biannual Drug Take-Back Days, with the April 2014 event yielding over 470 pounds of unwanted pharmaceuticals. By establishing such a prescription drug stewardship program, the City would provide residents with a safe and anonymous opportunity to surrender unused or expired prescriptions and controlled substances.

According to the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD), prescription drug abuse in the United States is increasing at alarming rates, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to their availability. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from home medicine cabinets.

In addition, many Americans do not know how to properly dispose of their unused medications, which often creates additional health, environmental, and safety hazards. The practice offlushing medicines down the drain can create an environmental hazard for aquatic wildlife as wastewater treatment plants cannot test or treat for pharmaceuticals, leaving these substances to end up in rivers, streams, lakes, groundwater systems, and oceans.

Permanent collection programs have seen widespread success in other locales and could serve as a possible template for Long Beach. For instance, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) collected over 20,000 pounds of prescription medication and nearly 12,000 pounds of used medical sharps in 2012. The department has seen an increase in the amount collected every year since the program began in 2009.

LASD has permanent secure prescription drug disposal boxes at twenty-one (21) patrol stations. However, LASD has no drop-off locations within the City of Long Beach. Similarly, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) database shows thirty-six (36) locations for medication collection within Los Angeles County, including police stations, local government offices, pharmacies, and community organizations; yet, none are located in the City of Long Beach.

This envisioned program could present an opportunity for other entities to enter into partnership with the City to share contract or vendor expenses related to disposal.

Accordingly, the City may want to consider possible collaboration with hospitals, long-term care facilities, and pharmacies to create additional locations for drug drop-off and collections, provided these facilities have completed any necessary registrations with the DEA and obtain approval to become authorized collectors. It should be noted that medical providers, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, mid-level practitioners, teaching institutions, and manufacturers can register to collect substances through the DEA Office of Diversion Control.

There is no fiscal impact related to this request for the analysis of the possibility of creating such a program; however, any additional costs for staff support of pharmaceutical collection and disposal would need to be identified and explored.

Approve recommendation.

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