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Bipartisan Federal Law Enables Safe Disposal of Medicines *Law will help prevent drug abuse, poisonings and protect environment*

October 13, 2010 – A new federal law, signed yesterday by President Barack Obama, will reduce costs and create more opportunities for collecting unused medicines from homes and long-term care facilities. The Safe and Secure Drug Disposal Act will give communities more options for providing secure take-back programs to prevent drug abuse, reduce the chances of accidental poisonings, and keep pharmaceutical drugs out of the environment.

“Passing the Safe and Secure Drug Disposal Act is a win for our children and our environment,” said U.S. Representative Jay Inslee (WA), a key House bill sponsor. “Prescription drug abuse is a growing plague in our communities. This law will give communities a common sense approach to easily and safely get rid of leftover prescription medications.”

The Drug Enforcement Administration will now begin to promulgate new regulations that will provide residents and long-term care facilities with greater flexibility to dispose of drugs that might include drop-off programs and mail-back options. Until now, opportunities to dispose of unwanted prescription drugs have been limited. Under current law, consumers are prohibited from giving certain unneeded, unused, or expired drugs to anyone besides law enforcement officers.

"Local governments need a safe solution that encourages residents to get unwanted drugs out of their medicine cabinets," said Dave Galvin of the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program for King County, Washington. "We now must develop a sustainable funding system so that taxpayers and local governments do not bear the full cost of these take-back programs."

“With this bipartisan effort, Congress stepped up to address an important issue that has the potential to curtail drug abuse and reduce environmental impacts from disposed medications,” said Scott Cassel, Executive Director of the Product Stewardship Institute, a non-profit institute that advocated for this law along with a unique multi-stakeholder coalition.

Product Stewardship Institute, Inc. (PSI) is a national non-profit environmental institute with membership from 46 states, more than 200 local governments, and more than 60 businesses, organizations, universities, and non-U.S. governments. PSI’s mission is to pursue initiatives to ensure that all those involved in the lifecycle of a product share responsibility for reducing its health and environmental impacts, with producers bearing primary financial responsibility. For more information, please visit www.productstewardship.us, or separate web page for [pharmaceuticals](#). For examples of take-back programs around the country, please see www.takebacknetwork.com.