

CALIFORNIA DRUG TAKE-BACK PROGRAM

PROGRAM SUMMARY

FUNDED BY

California Department of Health Care Services

ADMINISTERED BY

California Product Stewardship Council



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This program, which was awarded in 2018 and ended in 2021, was funded by California Department of Health Care Services' MAT Expansion Project and developed and administered in partnership with the California Product Stewardship Council. The program's goal was to increase the convenience to consumers for disposal of unwanted medicines (med(s)) across the state of California. Safe med disposal bins (bins) and safe med disposal envelopes were installed and distributed, respectfully, throughout the state for the express purpose of safely disposing unwanted meds.

Nearly 250 bins were installed and 100,000 envelopes were distributed via this program, greatly expanding the network of bins across the state of California and providing all citizens with even greater access to free, safe, and convenient med disposal.

ENVELOPE COMPONENT

The first and smallest component of the California Drug Take-Back Program is the safe med disposal return envelope component. Program administrators designed a pilot program in which 9 California counties were strategically selected to receive safe med disposal envelopes based on the following factors: 1) their rural, suburban, and urban status; 2) their opioid death rate (each county selected had an average or high level of opioid death rate per capita); and 3) their population (three small counties, four medium sized counties, and 2 large counties). The program administrators had the express purpose of distributing the envelopes to the elderly,



homebound, and those with limited mobility or access to existing or new med bins so that those community members would be able to safely and easily dispose of their unwanted meds from the comfort of their own home.

The envelopes have since been distributed to various distribution points (pharmacies, police departments, senior centers, etc.) in each county where they are distributed to the general public. Once the envelopes are in the hands of the consumer, they can be filled with unwanted meds (opioids and other prescription pills, patches, and ointments), then they are simply dropped in the mail (each envelope is postage-paid) and returned to the waste-to-energy facility for safe thermal destruction.

The data collected (such as, how quickly the envelopes were returned, when they were returned, the weight of the envelopes once returned; envelopes are anonymous and no personal information is gathered) will be passed along to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for analysis. DHCS may then use the data as a factor in determining if a larger, statewide program will be funded and implemented.



MED BIN COMPONENT

Although the envelopes distributed across the state were large in quantity, the primary component of the program was the med bin component. The successful Drug Take-Back Program resulted in 245 bins installed across the state of California, greatly expanding the existing network of bins in the state while simultaneously providing communities that received new bins with greater access to free safe med disposal.



CPSC developed a very detailed process for identifying and encouraging potential med bin hosts to apply for a med bin. We used social media, newsletters, presentations, and other means to encourage potential med bin hosts to apply and these efforts resulted in hundreds of applicants. Once CPSC completed its thorough and detailed

application review process and confirmed that the potential med bin hosts conformed to all state and federal laws and regulations, bins were awarded to approved applicants. Our team of professional installers traveled throughout the state for more than a year, installing the hundreds of med bins provided to the med bin hosts as a result of the grant.

CPSC also developed relationships with countless businesses, law enforcement offices, hospitals, pharmacists, elected officials, and

government employees over the course of the project. We were able to leverage these relationships to spread the word about the program, the benefits of having a med bin in their communities, and how to apply for a grant-funded med bin. We are grateful for each relationship that developed as a result of this program, although we are particularly grateful for the relationship we developed with the California State Board of Pharmacy and their willingness to help us educate potential med bin hosts about the program and application process.

Also, CPSC would like to thank all of the project stakeholders, especially the pharmacies and pharmacists that welcomed the med bins into their facilities. We are most thankful for our colleagues at Inmar Intelligence and Albertsons Companies for helping us to identify med bin sites, which helped for a more successful overall project.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

One of the goals of the Drug Take-Back Program was to educate the general public regarding the importance of disposing of unwanted meds in the most ecologically sound manner, the importance of using safe med disposal bins, and letting the general public know where they can find one of the newly installed bins. To that end, the program funded the design and distribution of 9 unique newspaper inserts across California. Each insert included numerous pages of information about the Drug Take-Back program, newly placed med bins in their communities, and the handling of unwanted meds.

The inserts also provided readers with articles that shared details about the importance of disposing of unwanted meds using the med bins. Each insert was colorful, insightful, and included stories that incorporated relevant local elements, such as quotes from local elected officials and authorities. See the map below for the regions that received newspaper inserts. A visitor to the program's website (www.takebackdrugs.org) can click on the link in the key to the right of the map to access the insert for their applicable region.



Newspaper Insert Regions

To read more about the program in your county, click on an insert below.

 [Peach Map Region - Click for insert](#)
Counties: Los Angeles, Ventura

 [Burnt Orange Map Region - Click for insert](#)
County: San Diego

NEW SAFE DISPOSAL OPTIONS!

Drug take-back bins let you safely dispose of unwanted, unneeded, or expired medications

-  **PAGE 2**
Learn why disposing of unused medications is important – and easy
-  **PAGE 3**
Find out what can be dropped off in a bin – and what can't
-  **PAGE 4-5**
Learn what can happen if medications are disposed of in the trash or flushed down a drain



One of the reasons the program was so successful was CPSC's focus on educating potential med bin hosts not only regarding the opportunities that this program afforded, but also about the crises faced by our communities as a result of drug abuse, the dangers associated with meds in the homes, and the opioid crisis. We traveled the state, leveraging our contacts with the California Opioid Safety Network (COSN) and their associated opioid coalitions across the state, giving presentations to groups such as the California Resource Recovery Association (CRRRA), the Household Hazardous Waste Information Exchange (HHWIE), and others, working with local officials, and encouraging potential med bin hosts to apply with the program. Our relationships with our new friends and colleagues continue to this day as we share informational updates about the program, legislation that may impact their med bins, and other news that they may find relevant.

Another educational component that contributed to the success of this project was the 5-webinar series that CPSC hosted throughout the duration of the program. This informational series of webinars explained the incredible opportunities afforded by the program to potential med bin hosts, the process for applying, and the many benefits associated with having med bins located in their local communities.



Each webinar had dozens of attendees and recordings of each webinar were shared via social media and YouTube for potential med bin hosts to view at their leisure.

One of the most detailed and long lasting educational components of this project is the program website: www.takebackdrugs.org. CPSC staff developed the site for the initial express purpose of providing potential med bin hosts with the information they needed to learn about the program and complete the application process. This detailed and informative website includes information useful to not just med bin hosts, but also the general public. During the project, the focus of the website included details that would be useful during the deployment and installation of the newly awarded med bins. Over the course of the project, the website shifted to include information that is useful to all California community members.



CPSC deliberately designed the website so that it could be transitioned to the new pharmaceutical product stewardship organization that will form as a result of California's SB 212 pharma and sharps bill that was passed and signed by Governor Brown in late 2018. CPSC is proud to have been the sponsor of this precedent setting law.

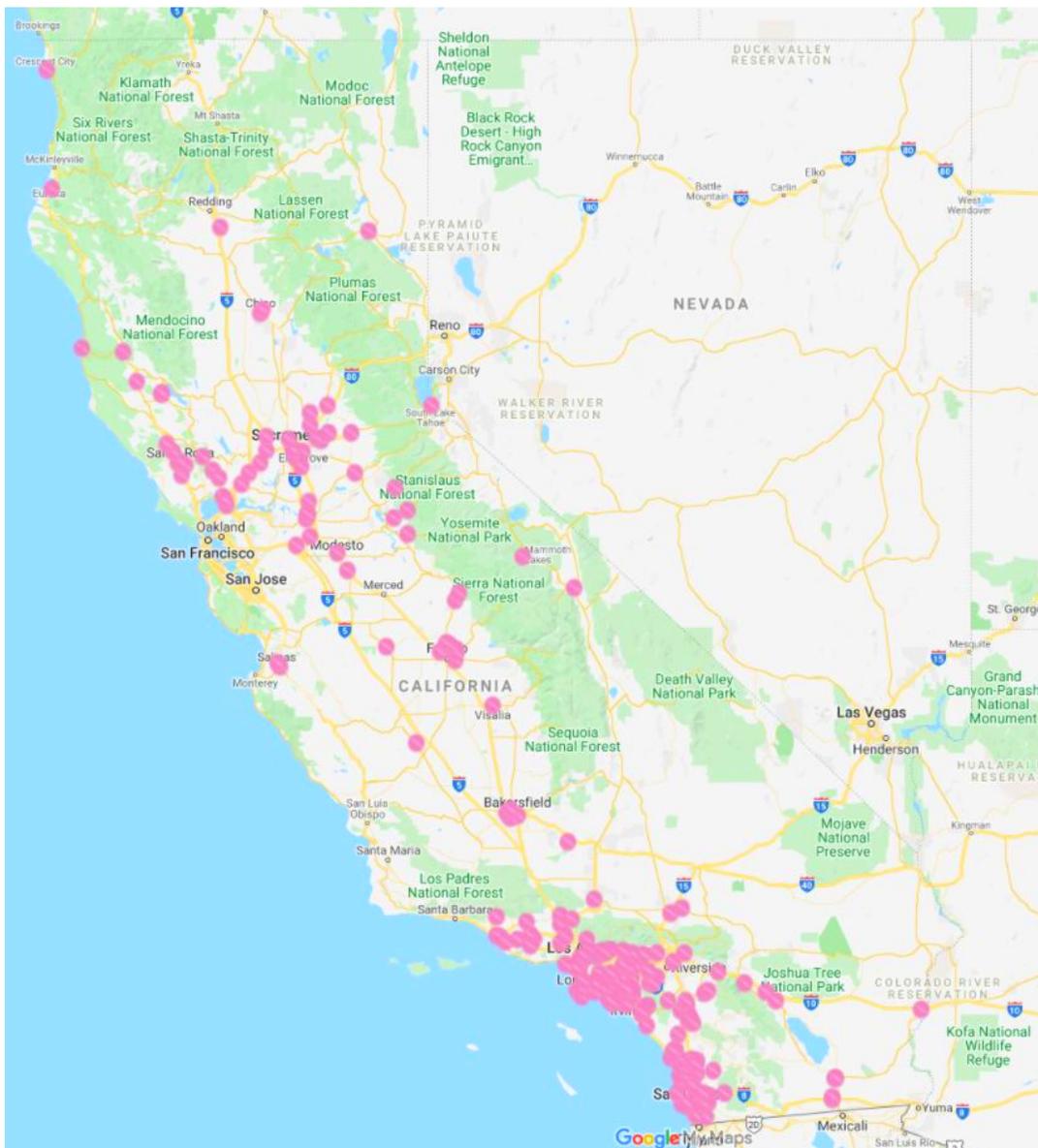
This bill requires, among many other things, that manufacturers of pharmaceuticals form one or more stewardship organizations to facilitate the safe and easy collection of unwanted meds by providing approved med bin hosts with free safe med disposal bins and servicing the bins on an ongoing basis. The bill also requires the stewardship organization(s) to distribute safe return envelopes for the disabled and homebound, similar to the envelope distribution that was part of this grant program. The stewardship organization will be required to service existing med bins and provide additional med bins to qualified hosts within 90 days of request of a bin.

We expect the stewardship organizations will be up and fully functional by the middle of 2022, although that depends on the stewardship organizations' ability to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements for approval, and complete all of the requirements in a timely fashion.



PROGRAM MED BIN MAP

CPSC created an interactive map for the public to use to locate a bin near them. Note that the pill icons on the map below represent new med bins placed via this program, each of which accept controlled & non-controlled drugs, Schedule II-V, and over the counter drugs. A complete picture of all existing med bins known to CPSC can be found by visiting the program website.



HOW IT WORKS

Not sure how to use a med bin? Follow these steps:

- At home, remove pills and other solid meds from their containers and consolidate in a clear plastic zipper bag. Keep liquid and cream medication tightly sealed in their original containers. (NOTE – keep meds in their child-proof container until just prior to drop off).

- Remove, mark out, or otherwise obscure personal information from solid and liquid/cream med containers to protect your personal information. Recycle containers for solid meds in your household recycling.
- Bring zipper bag and any liquids/creams to a bin location and place in the bin – It's that easy!

Note: Meds should remain in the original child-proof container until just prior to drop-off.

Easy as 1-2-3! Follow These Steps:

1



Obscure personal info from containers & recycle them.

2



Place pills in clear zipper bag. Keep liquids & creams in packaging.

3



Place zipper pill bag & liquids and creams in their original containers into the bin.

FINAL NOTES

Although the Drug Take-Back Program is no longer active, you may still be eligible for a safe disposal med bin via your local Department of Health, if your local agency offers this option.

California Drug Take-Back Program
www.takebackdrugs.org

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