

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF HEALTH
OF ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

IN THE MATTER OF SUPPORT FOR A) RESOLUTION HD-02-11
SECURE, CONVENIENT MEDICINE)
RETURN AND DISPOSAL PROGRAM)
TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND)
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF)
UNWANTED MEDICINES)

WHEREAS, drug overdose deaths have increased to surpass car accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in Washington State and, according to a 2009 National Center for Health Statistics data brief, 40% of poisoning deaths involve prescription opioid pain relievers, and

WHEREAS, Columbia University reports that abuse of prescription pain killers now ranks second, only behind marijuana, as the Nation’s most prevalent illegal drug problem, and

WHEREAS, abuse of medicines by teenagers is a growing problem, including abuse of prescription drugs such as painkillers, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety drugs, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medications, as well as over-the-counter drugs, such as cough and cold remedies, and

WHEREAS, unwanted medicines left in the home could increase opportunities for drug abuse, drug diversion, and accidental poisonings, and

WHEREAS, medicines disposed into sanitary sewer systems are not completely treated by the wastewater treatment facilities, allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment, and

WHEREAS, disposal of medicines to residential garbage is not secure and medicines in solid waste systems may end up in landfill leachate, eventually allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment, and

WHEREAS, unused or unwanted quantities of prescription and over-the-counter medicines are projected to be substantial, with some studies estimating that between 30% and 80% of patients do not finish commonly prescribed medicines such as pain medicines, antibiotics, and beta blockers, and

WHEREAS, a pilot medicine return project operating in Washington State since October of 2006 by Group Health Cooperative and Bartell Drugs has collected more than 27,000 pounds of unwanted household pharmaceuticals, demonstrating the demand and feasibility of such a system, and

WHEREAS, sheriff and police offices in several Washington counties and cities are operating drug take-back programs that collect and dispose of legally prescribed controlled substances, and, the Island County Sheriff supports the establishment of a medicine return program in Island County, and

WHEREAS, pharmaceutical manufacturers currently operate and fund successful drug take-back systems in Canada and several countries in Europe, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Island County Board of Health supports establishment of a convenient, safe, secure, and environmentally sound medicine return program for unwanted medicines from households through an internalized pharmaceutical manufacturer financing mechanism that covers the cost of collection, transportation, and hazardous waste disposal, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

APPROVED AT BOARD OF HEALTH WORK SESSION, held MARCH 2, 2011,
for signature by the Chair.

**BOARD OF HEALTH
ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Helen Price Johnson, Chair

ATTEST:



Roger S. Case, MD
Secretary to the Board