



**SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

11-32

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 11-32

**RESOLUTION SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR A WASHINGTON STATE SECURE MEDICINE
RETURN PROGRAM TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF UNWANTED
MEDICINES – HB 1370 and SSB 5234**

WHEREAS a significant number of medicines from households go unused or expire, and unwanted medicines can pose a risk to people's health and safety when stored in homes, and

WHEREAS unintentional poisoning deaths in Snohomish County have increased more than fivefold since 1990, most being the result of drug overdoses, and the medicines involved were mostly prescription medicines, and

WHEREAS in Washington State nearly 11 percent of 12-17 year-olds have used prescription medicines for recreation, and over half of the people using prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons obtained them from a friend or relative for free, and

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

WHEREAS unwanted medicines disposed to solid waste systems may end up in landfill leachate, eventually allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment, and

WHEREAS pharmaceuticals have been detected in the surface waters of Washington State and in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan areas affecting 41 million Americans, and

WHEREAS the number and volume of pharmaceuticals prescribed to U.S. residents has increased dramatically in the past decade, with Washington State residents now purchasing an average of 9 prescriptions per year, resulting in greater accumulations in Washington State homes, and

WHEREAS a pilot medicine return project operating in Washington State since October of 2006 by Group Health Cooperative and Bartell Drugs, in cooperation with a coalition of local and state governments, and non-profits, has collected more than 40,000 pounds of unwanted household pharmaceuticals, demonstrating the demand and feasibility of such a system, and

WHEREAS sustainable funding sources are needed to provide or continue operation of take back programs for legally prescribed controlled substances at sheriff and police offices in Washington counties and cities, and

WHEREAS communities are struggling to implement and finance programs to address the public safety impacts of leftover medicines in resident's homes and the environmental impacts of improper disposal of unwanted medicines, and

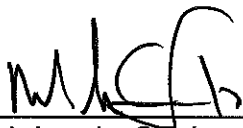
WHEREAS pharmaceutical manufacturers currently operate and fund successful drug take-back systems in Canada and several countries in Europe, and

WHEREAS this Board has previously endorsed a secure medicine return program,

NOW THEREFORE:

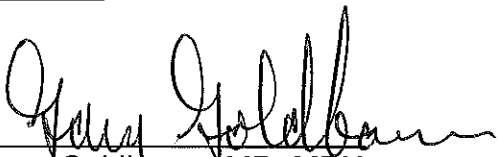
1. The Board of Health believes that pharmaceutical manufacturers, as the originators of the medicines, have the greatest responsibility for end-of-life management, that they have the expertise, relationships, security awareness, scope of service and resources needed to establish safe, secure and effective return programs, and
2. The Board of Health reiterates its support for state legislation (now HB 1370 and SSB 5234), which requires pharmaceutical producers to provide and pay for a cost-effective medicine return program for the safe and secure collection and destruction of unwanted medications from households.

ADOPTED this 9th day of November, 2011.



Mark Lamb, Chair
Board of Health

ATTEST:



Gary Goldbaum, MD, MPH
Health Officer and Director