

Secure Medicine Return Laws in WA

Pharmaceutical companies are financing and coordinating convenient DEA-compliant drug take-back programs under local Health Board ordinances. The industry's MED-Project programs are operating in King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties and being implemented in Clallam and Skagit counties.

The 33-gallon MED-Project drop boxes fill up with medicines every 1 to 2 weeks at many locations, like QFC grocery stores in Everett and Seattle and police stations in Lynnwood, Edmonds, and Shoreline.

A new 2018 state law, the WA Secure Drug Take-Back Act [RCW 69.48](#), is modeled on these successful county-level ordinances. Manufacturers must comply with the local laws until 1 year after they begin operating an approved statewide drug take-back program. The manufacturers' program will then merge into a consistent statewide program providing secure drug take-back options in all communities.



Drug Producers' MED-Project Program Operating in 5 Counties

County Approximate Population	Secure Drop Boxes Provided by Drug Producers <i>Prescription and over-the-counter medicines accepted, including controlled substances</i>	Mail-back Services Provided by Drug Producers
King 2.2 million MED-Project program operating since November 2016.	>115 secure medicine drop boxes. More than 75% of drop boxes are at pharmacies, clinics, hospitals and the rest are at law enforcement agencies. <i>Before MED-Project: 3 pharmacy drop boxes and 10 police drop boxes in smaller towns.</i>	Prepaid mailers distributed at 17 libraries and some town halls. Mailers are available to homebound residents & their service providers upon request via website or phone.
Snohomish 780,000 MED-Project program operating since August 2017.	37 secure medicine drop boxes , roughly half at pharmacies or clinics and half at police stations. <i>Before MED-Project: 2 pharmacy drop boxes and 25 law enforcement drop boxes without stable funding.</i>	Prepaid mailers are available to homebound residents & their service providers upon request via website or phone.
Kitsap 265,000 MED-Project program operating since March 2018.	12 secure medicine drop boxes at 8 pharmacies or clinics and 4 law enforcement agencies. <i>Before MED-Project: 1 pharmacy drop box and 2 drop boxes at Sheriff's offices.</i>	Prepaid mailers are available to homebound residents & their service providers upon request via website or phone.
Pierce 860,000 MED-Project program operating since April 2018.	38 secure medicine drop boxes , roughly half at pharmacies or clinics and half at police stations. <i>Before MED-Project: 4 pharmacy drop boxes and 17 law enforcement drop boxes.</i>	Prepaid mailers are distributed from 2 locations and available to homebound residents & their service providers upon request via website or phone.
Whatcom 216,000 MED-Project program started in November 2018.	6 secure medicine drop boxes at 5 pharmacies and 1 police station. All 6 are new locations. Existing drop box programs and additional collectors are expected to join the MED-Project program.	Prepaid mailers will be provided for homebound residents & their service providers, and to communities lacking a secure drop box.

Under these ordinances, qualified pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, and law enforcement agencies may join the MED-Project program at any time, so the number of collection sites is still increasing.

Drug Producers' Programs in Development in 2 More Counties

Clallam and Skagit County are implementing similar local ordinances. Stewardship plans are under review. In Skagit County, the anticipated start of the MED-Project program is February 2019.

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More About the Manufacturer's MED-Project Programs:

MED-Project LLC is the stewardship organization operating the drug take-back programs on behalf of roughly 400 pharmaceutical manufacturers. Manufacturers are responsible for costs of secure drop boxes, collection supplies, transportation and safe destruction of collected medicines, public education, and program administration.

Leftover and expired household medicines are accepted by the MED-Project program. This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, including legally prescribed controlled substances.

The local Board of Health ordinances and the new state law have drug take-back service standards for each city, town, and unincorporated areas. All qualified pharmacies and law enforcement agencies can opt in to host and staff a drug drop box. Drop box locations are still being added regularly to the MED-Project programs in operation.

See <http://www.med-project.org/locations> for each county's drop-off sites, participating collectors, and mail-back services.

For additional resources and information about drug take-back laws in Washington State:

See my resource page at: <https://www.cehstrategies.com/wa-drug-take-back-laws>

Or contact me: Margaret Shield at 206-499-5452 or margaret.shield@CEHstrategies.com