



AGENCY: City Council  
MEETING DATE: September 24, 2018  
DEPARTMENT: City Manager  
PRESENTED BY: Tabatha Miller  
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## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### **TITLE:**

**Receive Report and Provide Direction to Staff on Possible Placement of Drug Take Back Drop Box and Sharps Disposal Box**

### **ISSUE:**

The Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) and MendoRecycle have requested cooperation and assistance with the placement of one additional Drug Take Back Drop Box and one Sharps Disposal Box within the City of Fort Bragg. This program is part of developing a Harm Reduction Strategic Plan in partnership with Ukiah, Willits, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network (MCAVHN) and Adventist Health Ukiah Valley Street Medicine.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Drug Take Back boxes allow anyone in the community to responsibly drop off unused, expired, or unwanted medicines. Use of Drug Take Back boxes has been shown to reduce illegal drug use, unintentional poisoning, and pharmaceutical contamination of water. If the drugs are not left in medicine cabinets they cannot be used by recreational drug users or accidentally taken by a child or adult.

- Every 14 minutes, an American dies from an unintentional drug overdose.
- Seven out of 10 people who abuse prescription drugs get them from friends or family.
- Among children, emergency room visits for accidental drug poisonings are twice as common as poisonings for other household products (e.g., cleaning solutions).

A common method of disposing of leftover or unwanted medicines is flushing them. This sends them into our rivers, streams, oceans and other waterways because our wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove medications. Low levels of antibiotics, anti-seizure medicines, mood stabilizers, and sex hormones exist in drinking water across the U.S. The harmful effects on marine life from low-levels of medications are well-documented.

Needle Drop boxes allow community members to dispose of used syringes, needles and lancets often referred to as "sharps." In addition to needles used in illegal drug use, sharps may be used at home, work or while traveling to manage different medical conditions of people and their pets, including allergies, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, blood clotting disorders, and psoriasis. These sharps can cause injury and used sharps may have human blood on them and can carry blood borne infections, including hepatitis, HIV and other serious diseases. Tossing sharps into the trash or flushing them into the toilet can pose health risks for individuals who collect solid waste or maintain our wastewater systems, and other members of the public who may come into contact with these sharps. Staff encounters these sharps when cleaning City restrooms, parks and other public facilities.

Adding an additional location for community members to drop off unwanted medicines and a separate drop off location for sharps, provides individuals an additional option for disposing of these items and reduces the risk that workers and members of the public come into unwanted

contact with these items. Convenient drop boxes encourage and offer individuals the best and safest way to dispose of these items.

The boxes are made of heavy duty galvanized steel and constructed to resist corrosion. The boxes are lockable and will be anchored to ½” bolts sunk into a concrete base. They would be located outside, so that they are accessible 24-hours a day, potentially encouraging drop off by individuals who are not comfortable using the current location at the Police Department.

Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network (MCAVHN) staff will be responsible for regularly emptying the drop off boxes. HHSS and MendoRecycle are requesting that the City take responsibility for installing the boxes but the City would not be responsible for the initial purchase of the drop boxes.

A number of locations have been recommended for placement of the drop boxes:

1. The Waste Management Recycle Center on Pudding Creek Road, because it is already a site where people bring items that should not be thrown in their regular trash bins. We would confirm that WM was willing to host the drop boxes. MCAVHN regularly meets there with users so it is a convenient site for disposal of used needles.
2. In front of the Mendocino County Public Health building on Fir Street. They have a sharps drop off inside but it is only available during business hours and the staff have to empty the box.
3. Near City Hall or Town Hall. Needles and other sharps are found in the restrooms at Town Hall and in the restrooms at Bainbridge Park. These facilities are subject to regular patrols by the PD and attempts at destroying or breaking into the boxes should therefore be reduced.
4. Near the hospital facilities as it is common to find drop off boxes near hospitals or clinics. We would need to ask the hospital for their approval of such a placement.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Provide staff guidance on an acceptable location for a Sharps drop off box and a Drug Take Back drop off box and direct staff to work with County staff to coordinate the delivery and installation.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

Provide staff direction to not cooperate with HHSA and decline acceptance of the Sharps drop off box and a Drug Take Back drop off box.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Coordination of delivery, installation and possible permit matters would require an estimated eight hours of staff time at an approximate cost of \$600.

**CONSISTENCY:**

This effort is part of the work of the Safe Rx Mendocino Opioid Safety Coalition. Councilmember Cimolino and Police Department staffs are active participants in the efforts to raise the awareness about the dangers of opioids and how to get treatment.

**IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:**

If Council is in support of the effort, the boxes will be ordered within the next few weeks and installed within two months.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Drop Box Dimensions and Specifications

**NOTIFICATION:**

Public Safety Contact List