



Rockland County Set to Start First Local Drug Take-Back Program on the East Coast

Newly passed ordinance requires manufacturers to finance and manage safe disposal program for leftover medications

Rockland County, NY - Today, Rockland County, New York became the first county on the U.S. East Coast to safely dispose of unwanted medications in a program funded and managed by drug companies. The ordinance will provide over 300,000 residents with convenient access to safe drug disposal. The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) provided technical advice to Rockland County officials and legislators to craft the program.

Over \$1 billion in leftover drugs are thrown in the trash, flushed, or consigned to medicine cabinets each year. Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the U.S., and nearly 70 percent of people who begin using prescription drugs non-medically get them from a family member or friend, often from medicine cabinets. Drugs left in the home also put seniors, children, and pets at risk for accidental poisoning. When flushed or placed in the trash, over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs can contaminate our

drinking water and harm aquatic species.

"By providing safe drug take-back locations to our residents, this law has the potential to curb drug abuse and reduce water quality impacts in Rockland County," said Legislator Lon Hofstein, who introduced this bill in the County Legislature. "Convenient collection sites are key to a successful program, and we look forward to working with local pharmacies and the pharmaceutical industry to bring this program to fruition."

With this ordinance, Rockland County joins 13 counties, two cities, and two states that require pharmaceutical manufacturers to fund and manage drug take-back programs. Rockland's law is unique in that it requires pharmacies to participate as collection locations, but only those chains with three or more U.S. stores. This provision will significantly increase the number of pharmacy collection locations in the County and provide greater convenience to residents.

The law marks a trend in New York: multiple counties have shown interest in passing similar legislation, including Erie County, which recently introduced a bill for which PSI submitted supporting testimony. At the state level, PSI and the New York Product Stewardship Council

(NYPSC) are currently working with legislators to strengthen an existing state-wide drug take-back bill.

"The passage of this ordinance is a vital step forward for New York State in effectively addressing the impacts of leftover drugs on our communities," said Andrew Radin, chair of NYPSC. "We hope this ordinance propels our state legislators to pass a law to ensure all residents have access to convenient, safe drug disposal options, and that it paves the way for other municipalities and states around the nation to pursue similar legislation."

"We applaud Rockland County for recognizing that drug companies are responsible for safely managing leftover medicine and that drug take-back is a key element in reducing drug abuse and water quality impacts," said Scott Casse, chief executive officer of PSI, which has promoted drug take-back nationwide for the past decade. "This law should also save money for Rockland County governments, which traditionally bear the burden of paying for proper disposal."

[Click here](#) to learn more about drug take-back.



About the [Product Stewardship Institute \(PSI\)](#):

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national, membership-based nonprofit committed to reducing the health, safety, and environmental impacts of consumer products across their lifecycle with a strong focus on sustainable end-of-life management. Headquartered in Boston, Mass., PSI takes a unique product stewardship approach to solving waste management problems by encouraging product design changes and mediating stakeholder dialogues. With 47 state environmental agency members, along with hundreds of local government members from coast-to-coast, and 110 corporate, business, academic, non-U.S. government, and organizational partners, we work to design, implement, evaluate, strengthen, and promote both legislative and voluntary product stewardship initiatives across North America. Like us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

About the [New York Product Stewardship Council \(NYPSC\)](#):

NYPSC works to implement the principles of product stewardship in New York State and nationally by providing leadership, guidance, and resources (including policies, evaluations, and educational tools) to individuals, organizations, institutions, local governments, the state legislature, elected officials, and manufacturers. Product stewardship is the act of minimizing health, safety, environmental and social impacts of a product and its packaging throughout all lifecycle stages, and maximizing economic benefits. The producer of a product has the greatest ability to minimize adverse impacts, but other stakeholders such as suppliers, retailers, and consumers also play a role. The NYPSC educates these stakeholders about the benefits of product stewardship and provides a forum for the exchange of information regarding existing policies and programs.

About [Rockland County](#):

More than 325,000 people from diverse backgrounds call beautiful Rockland County home. Geographically the smallest county in New York State, Rockland sits between the historic Hudson River and the magnificent Ramapo Mountains. It is governed by an Executive and 17 County Legislators. About one-third of Rockland is parkland and includes the popular Bear Mountain and Harriman State Parks, two of the busiest parks in the nation. A suburb of New York City, Rockland is about 25 miles from Manhattan and is also home to dozens of museums, parks, historic homes, a zoo, and great shopping and dining opportunities, as well as the massive new Tappan Zee Bridge construction project.