

## **Olmsted Falls, Ohio**

**Program Overview:** The City of Olmsted Falls, Ohio (population 8,600) developed a medication disposal program in conjunction with a nearby hospital, Southwest General Health Center (354 beds). The Medication Disposal Program was launched in April 2006 as a pilot program. If there is continued interest, the hospital may expand participation to neighboring communities.

The program allows individuals to drop off outdated or unwanted medications at Southwest General Health Center's Protection Services Office (security office). The office is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hospital will accept non-prescription (OTC), prescription, and pet medications, as well as pills, ointments, liquids (the bottle must be placed inside a sealed plastic bag), and lotions. However, controlled substances are not accepted. The health center also cannot accept syringes, asthma inhalers or other drugs in aerosol canisters, or chemotherapy drugs. After collection, a professional medical waste handler processes the drugs safely in accordance with Ohio law.

Special 28-gallon collection containers are used to store the drugs until the medical waste handler picks them up for processing. The containers are located in a secure area of the security office.

If individuals are unable to drop off the medications themselves, they can call Southwest General's Health Connection. This health information and referral service will arrange a pick-up by a community volunteer.

Program planners developed a [trifold brochure](#) introducing the issue of medicine disposal and publicizing the program (included in [section 4](#) of this resource kit).

**Sites:** Medications can be dropped off at the Protection Services Office at Southwest General Health Center between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. every day.

**Key Motivation:** The main motivators for this collection program are:

- 1) To get old medicines out of the home medicine cabinet in order to avoid dosing errors and attempts at self-medication with out-of-date drugs, especially among senior citizens;
- 2) To get old medicines out of homes to avoid accidental poisonings, especially among children;
- 3) To reduce the potential for intentional abuse of medicines;
- 4) To dispose of medication responsibly and keep it out of landfills and the water supply, where it can cause harm to wildlife and the environment; and
- 5) To safeguard patient privacy by keeping medication vials out of landfills, where personal information could be discovered;
- 6) To further enhance and extend the Health Center's commitment to recycling efforts and community health and well-being. The hospital already sponsors a yearly collection program for mercury thermometers, and saw this program as another opportunity to serve the community.

Organizing Body: The pharmaceutical disposal program is primarily run by the Southwest General Health Center in partnership with the City of Olmsted Falls.

Partners: University Hospitals of Cleveland also assisted in the development of this program.

Level of Implementation: This collection program is implemented at the local level, primarily for residents of Olmsted Falls, OH, and the surrounding suburbs. This was started as a pilot program, and organizers hope that other communities will become involved this year.

Cost: Staff members of the hospital worked with a city councilman and a volunteer member of the community to develop, implement and promote the program. The hospital absorbed the costs of the brochure printing and the disposal costs of the medications collected. There is a \$60 flat fee to dispose of each container.

Outcome: The program is ongoing; collection statistics are not available at this time.

Contacts: Kristin Jacobs  
Volunteer promoter/Resident of Olmsted Falls  
E-mail: [kristinjacobs125@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinjacobs125@yahoo.com)  
Phone: 440-527-1398 (cell)  
<http://www.olmstedfalls.org/meddisposal.htm>

Mary Van Dalen  
Corporate Communications Department  
Southwest General Health Center  
Phone: (440) 816-8000  
[www.swgeneral.com](http://www.swgeneral.com)