

Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal Program (P²D²), Pontiac, Illinois

Program Overview: The P²D² program developed out of a research project undertaken by Pontiac Township High School Ecology students about the disposal of unwanted medicines. The project quickly expanded to Illinois Studies classes. The students undertook a multi-faceted campaign to provide their community with safe medicine disposal options and partnered with local pharmacies in Livingston County, Illinois. The program adapted and evolved as they looked for sustainable approaches for their community. The program has since grown to include pharmacies in 25 Illinois counties, Washington, Texas, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

The students developed collection bins, billboards, press releases, and contacted many federal, state, and local officials to help encourage local communities to reduce the amount of unwanted medicines being thrown away inappropriately and ending up in Illinois waterways.

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant works with communities that want to join the P²D² network by providing information needed to undertake safe and legal medicine collection programs and providing funding for program advertisements and for communities to purchase safe medicine collection bins for police stations.

The P²D² network also works with the state of Illinois to identify and coordinate collection programs state-wide. The State provides funding for disposal and transportation of unwanted medicines through state contracts with hazardous waste haulers. IL-IN Sea Grant has provided funding for collection bins for police stations and some advertising (billboards, flyers). Pharmaceuticals that are collected by the P²D² program are sent for incineration in a hazardous waste incinerator.

Sites: For a searchable map of collection programs in counties throughout Illinois, please visit <http://www.epa.state.il.us/medication-disposal/locations/index.html>. The P²D² program continually updates Illinois EPA to keep this map current.

This is a typical list of items accepted through the P²D² Program at local Pharmacies:

Items Accepted at Pharmacies

- Prescription medications (except controlled*)
- All over-the-counter medications
- Medication samples
- Pet Medications
- Vitamins & Supplements
- Medicated ointments, lotions, creams, and oils
- Liquid medication in leakproof containers
- Homeopathic Remedies
- Suppositories

Items Not Accepted at Pharmacies

- Needles/sharps (including syringes)
- Thermometers
- Controlled prescriptions
- IV bags
- Bloody or infectious waste
- Personal care products
- Empty containers
- Hydrogen Peroxide

Items Accepted at Police Departments (look to map for your area)

- Controlled Substances

Key Motivations: The purpose of the P²D² program is to provide students with the opportunity to act as a catalyst for change in their community. Through this program, students educate themselves on environmental protection and the dangers of drug abuse, while at the same time partnering with government agencies and grassroots campaigns to eliminate drug abuse, diversion of substances and environmental degradation.

Organizing Body: Pontiac Township High School (including instructors Paul Ritter, *Ecology class* and Eric Bohm, *Assistant Principle*)

Partners: Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois American Water (water treatment plant), Walgreens of Pontiac, Doc's Drugs, Sartoris Super Drugs, K-mart in Pontiac, Pontiac Police Department, local government officials and many others.

Cost: Program costs vary by community. Currently either the pharmacy or IL EPA is paying for the disposal on non-controlled substances. In some cases IL-IN Sea Grant has purchased the secure collection bins for police stations and provided funding for program advertisement through billboards, flyers and radio advertisements.

Outcome: As of November 2009 the state of Illinois, including counties that have initiated P²D² collection and education programs, has collected and disposed of over 87,500 pounds of pharmaceuticals.

Long-term Actions: P²D² Program Coordinators will continue operating in counties and states that have already adopted the program, and hope to eventually educate and engage communities on a national level.

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