



Pharmaceutical Safe Disposal And Public Education
2008 Program Development Task Force Meetings



Made possible through the generous support of Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation

SUMMARY

In April of 2008, EPA Region 5 issued the Great Lakes Earth Day Challenge: “to collect and properly dispose of old and unused, expired or unwanted medicine. EPA's goal is to collect at least 1 million pills to keep contaminants out of the Great Lakes.”

The total actually collected exceeded 4.5 million.....

Onsite Wastewater considered taking part in this one day event - but the Board chose instead to invite community leaders to meet and discuss creating a regional program that would address this growing issue throughout the year. Through the generous support of a

planning development grant from Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, three meetings are scheduled to begin a process for developing a sustainable safe disposal and public education collaboration.

Northwest Michigan is a water rich tapestry of wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes and bays - all connected via groundwater. Our health and economy rely upon preserving this resource. Although there is still considerable debate concerning the cumulative effects of human and agricultural pharmaceutical residues - as witnessed by the disposal guidelines issued by US Fish And Wildlife Service and Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America - their presence in area water sources is of considerable concern.

In addition, and of equal concern, is the illicit and illegal use of stolen or scavenged unused pharmaceutical products by area drug addicts.

Moderator is Dr. Richard Otis P.E. Ph.D., DEE. (Onsite Wastewater Technical and Engineering Consultant.)

Dr. Otis is a key participant in developing the EPA Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Management of Onsite Systems. Dr. Otis has been involved in research and demonstration of wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal alternatives including development of alternative natural treatment systems and alternative collection sewers and assessment of the environmental impact of these technologies since 1970. He has developed design manuals and presented training seminars regarding onsite treatment systems, alternative sewers, natural systems for wastewater treatment, innovative and alternative technology assessments, and regulatory models for their effective management. Dr. Otis is past chair of the Small Community Committee of the Water Environment Federation and the Technical Practices Committee of the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, and a diplomat in the American Academy of Environmental Engineers.

Assessment of the Emerging Issues of Concern regarding Pharmaceutical Products

Attendees were requested to review the following background resources:

www.glerl.noaa.gov/res/Centers/HumanHealth/docs/medicine_disposal_workshop

Illinois / Indiana Sea Grant Program: www.iisgcp.org/unwantedmeds/

USEPA - Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Products: www.epa.gov/ppcp/

Identification of Information: Known and Unknown

Attendees were sent a CD of PDF resources to review prior to the next meeting including:
Water Environment Research Foundation: July 9 Webinar: [TOC7-9-08.pdf](#)

1. WERF Key Activities on Trace Organic Compounds, Lola Olabode, WERF
2. Technical Brief on Trace Organic Compounds and Implications for Wastewater Treatment, Paul Anderson, AMEC
3. Fate of Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products through Wastewater Treatment Processes, Joan Oppenheimer, MWH
4. Development of Indicators and Surrogates for Chemical Contaminant Removal during Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation, Jörg Drewes, Colorado School of Mines

Also: Wisconsin Onsite Waste Recycling Association is currently conducting 12 sampling studies.

Also: EPA <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/ppcp/>

EPA Continues Work to Understand Potential Impacts of Pharmaceuticals in Water.

EPA is seeking comment on an Information Collection Request (ICR) that will be used in a detailed study of unused pharmaceutical disposal methods by hospitals, long-term care facilities, hospices and veterinary hospitals. EPA is seeking more information on the practices of the health care industry to inform future potential regulatory actions, and identify best management and proper disposal practices. This is one of several actions the agency is taking to strengthen its understanding of disposal practices and potential risks from pharmaceuticals in water.

Identification of assets required for a successful and sustainable program

Attendees identified key agencies whose cooperation would be vital for success and areas where more information was required.

Action Steps & Bright Ideas:

- 🍌 Develop a Collection Event for Grand Traverse County working with Independent Pharmacies
- 🍌 Use this as a springboard for developing a Permanent Placement Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program for Grand Traverse County with a safe but simple procedure to encourage appropriate use. Tie in with public education and special emphasis on over use of antibiotics.
- 🍌 Incorporate pharmaceutical collection with regular Clean Sweep events:
 - * Why isn't that happening now? i) cost of disposal, ii) liability, iii) training for safe handling
- 🍌 Seek funding for Collaborative, unified safe disposal public education materials:
- 🍌 Begin serious dialog of the issues associated with recycling/reuse of unused, but still viable, pharmaceutical products with an eye to future legislation. i) even though this is currently illegal, it is happening and is likely to increase with the ever rising Rx costs and lack of insurance.
- 🍌 What is the current norm in veterinarian practices?
- 🍌 Solicit Pharmaceutical company support - return to manufacturer for disposal via drug representatives at local medical offices. See: <http://www.takebackexpress.com/> in response to [California Senate Bill 966](#) signed by Governor Schwarzenegger October 12, 2007. : "Take Back Express is the industry's "one-stop-solution" for the growing problem of improper disposal of unused and expired pharmaceutical drugs."
- 🍌 John Campbell will contact Walgreens about starting a Pilot Project for Grand Traverse Area. "Putting the Green in Walgreen!"
- 🍌 Bob Paulus pledged the full support of Michigan Environmental Health Association.

Dendra Best. Executive Director. Onsite Wastewater of Northwest Michigan.

William A. Crawford. 2008 Board Chair &
Director Benzie-Leelanau District Health Dept.

