



PRESS RELEASE

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Awareness Campaign Targets Pharmaceutical Waste in Missouri

“Fish Don’t Want Your Meds” educates consumers on responsible pharmaceutical disposal

Springfield, MO — After learning that death from an unintentional overdose occurs every six minutes and medications are a top source of accidental poisoning for children, many may be tempted to **flush their unused pharmaceuticals** down the toilet. But this practice – responsible for as many as **2,300 tons of hazardous waste annually**, according to the EPA – can **pollute drinking water and harm aquatic species**, while putting meds in the trash increases their risk of being abused. In Missouri, a recently launched campaign aims to help residents responsibly empty their medicine cabinets in a way that won’t harm the environment or put people at risk.

“Fish Don’t Want Your Meds” connects Missouri residents with resources – including an interactive map – to help them conveniently drop off unused medications for safe disposal. It was created by the Missouri Product Stewardship Council (MOPSC), a coalition of governments, businesses, and other stakeholders, and the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI), a national policy advocate and consulting nonprofit. The project is part of a growing movement to develop perennial statewide take-back programs, partially in response to the opioid epidemic: Statistics show that seven out of 10 people who abuse prescription pharmaceuticals obtain them from friends or family – and often from home medicine cabinets.



“People with unused medications in their medicine cabinets shouldn’t have to wait for a twice-yearly DEA take-back day to safely dispose of them,” said Angie Snyder, Chair of the MOPSC. “This campaign will help protect people and the environment.”

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Missouri's new program is part of a nationwide push for pharmaceuticals Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs and legislation. In April, Illinois became the seventh U.S. state – with Maine, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington State, New York, and California – to enact an [EPR law that requires drug manufacturers to pay for and run a statewide take-back program](#).

“Missouri’s new take-back campaign is a great way to educate consumers about pharmaceuticals responsibility,” said Scott Cassel, CEO and Founder of PSI. “We look forward to continuing to work with the Missouri Product Stewardship Council to make sure all residents connect with these valuable resources.”

PSI has been working for 15 years on pharmaceuticals take-back laws and policies, including developing model drug take-back legislation and leading the national effort to enact the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act in 2010, which made it possible for pharmacies to accept unused drugs.

With attention-grabbing copy and relatable graphics, the “Fish Don't Want Your Meds” campaign educates the public on the environmental impact of flushing pharmaceuticals, the dangers that unused medications pose to children, and how to responsibly return them for disposal. More information is at www.tinyurl.com/missouri-meds.

ABOUT PSI

The Product Stewardship Institute is a policy advocate and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States. Since 2000, PSI has helped enact 130 extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws across 16 product categories in 33 states — the bedrock of the circular economy. We work with governments, academia, nonprofits, and business to ensure that products are responsibly managed from design to end of life. Join us at www.productstewardship.us.

ABOUT MOPSC

The Missouri Product Stewardship Council (MO PSC) is a coalition of local governments, businesses, and other stakeholders that aim to reduce waste, increase reuse and recycling, save local governments money, and support jobs. We take a product stewardship approach, which seeks to share responsibility with product manufacturers and creates accountability for managing waste, particularly at the post-consumer stage. www.missouripsc.org

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