

For Immediate Release

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Wyoming City Council Endorses Long Term Pharmaceutical Take Back Program

Wyoming, Mich., Jan. 23, 2012 – As part of its continued commitment to sustainability, including environmental quality, the Wyoming City Council recently signed the “Key Elements of Pharmaceutical Collection and Disposal Programs: A Vision for the Great Lakes Region.”

The document was developed with input from government officials and organizations in states around the Great Lakes, including City of Wyoming Environmental Services Supervisor Dave Oostindie. The document sets out a vision for the future in which all residents have access to convenient, secure pharmaceutical disposal programs. The document also describes a future where those who benefit from the manufacture, sale and use of pharmaceutical drugs have the greatest responsibility for ensuring program success. In the document, pharmaceutical companies are targeted to fund the expansion of existing programs or create and sustain new infrastructure.

Currently, the City of Wyoming participates in the West Michigan Drug Take Back Meds program, which was developed using the City’s original WyMeds program as a model. The West Michigan Take Back Meds program is a joint effort between local pharmacies, law enforcement, wastewater treatment facilities and government agencies to provide residents with safe, convenient access to proper medicine disposal.

The City of Wyoming Police Department along with most other law enforcement agencies around west Michigan are drop off sites for controlled substances. Currently, pharmacies participating are not allowed to take back controlled substances. Individuals can drop off prescription medications year round during regular business hours at all participating locations. The City of Wyoming Police Department also participates in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Authority’s National Drug Take Back Day twice annually, allowing residents to drop off all types of medications, including pet meds. The next DEA collection will be held on April 28, 2012.

“The ‘Key Elements’ document is a direct result of our program and a couple of others that have been doing collections over the last couple of years,” Oostindie said.

“By signing the ‘Key Elements’ pledge, we are committing to maintaining and promoting our program until the federal rules are promulgated by the DEA later this year,” Oostindie said. “The pledge will also, hopefully, improve the program by securing a funding source for the disposal from some of the drug manufacturers and by working with physician groups on a more realistic dosing of medications at the time of treatment. That way people don’t have extra drugs sitting around with the potential for diversion or accidental overdoses.”

A report released in 2010 by the National Center for Health Statistics brought to light the hefty increase in prescription drug use occurring throughout the country since 1999. The report stated that there has been a 10 percent increase in Americans who took one prescription in the past month; a 20 percent increase in those who took two prescriptions per month; and a 70 percent increase in people taking five or more prescription drugs per month. Along with this increase comes increased potential for these drugs to reach local water supplies via disposal methods and

medication residue passing out of the body and into the sewer lines as well as for an unintended prescription drug overdose.

“Every bit we keep out of the environment now is less we need to remove from our water and wastewater treatment facilities later,” Oostindie said. “It is also saving money on future treatment installations and the over \$9 billion spent annually on health care costs related to the treatment of prescription drug abuse and accidental overdoses in this country.”

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