

## Interested in Setting Up a Medicine Return Program?

Prescription and over-the-counter drug misuse is a serious health concern. A medicine return program is one way to reduce access to medicine. Parents and other caretakers then have a way to safely dispose of no longer needed and expired drugs.

Several Washington communities have established a medicine return program. One example, from TOGETHER! in Thurston County, includes the following steps:

1. **Establish a Medicine Return Task Force** (or use an existing structure such as a county meth task force).

Ensure that your membership includes:

- Law Enforcement (they are the only people legally authorized to handle controlled substances) and
- County Solid Waste or Hazardous Waste Department (their expertise is necessary)

Invite other community members, for example, people from:

- Hospitals
- Chemical dependency treatment agencies
- Community mobilization and substance abuse prevention
- County health department
- Schools
- Businesses (e.g., drug stores)

2. **Take action**

Determine the location for your community's medicine return or drop box  
Develop a budget that includes cost of the box, installation, disposal of drugs, maintenance of box, and publicity. For example:

<http://dvault.com/index.html>

Establish method of monitoring and scheduled pick up

Install box

Announce the purpose and location to the public

3. **Follow-up**

Once you have successfully established your Medicine Return Program, consider launching an education campaign.

The goal is to keep kids from misusing prescription  
and over-the-counter drugs!