



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health & Human Services
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By
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DEAN
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SB 2339 SD1 – RELATING TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and members of the committee:

My name is Carolyn Ma, and I am the Dean for the UH Hilo Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (DKICP). As designated lead for UH Hilo and on behalf of Interim Chancellor Dr. Marcia Sakai, University of Hawai'i at Hilo fully supports this bill with the proposed amendments that pharmacies may accept for disposal certain prescription medications (excluding controlled substances) utilizing either collection receptacles or mail-back programs.

Unused medications in households and at various patient care facilities expose residents to potential harm due to mistaken ingestion and increase the potential for theft and assault. In children ≤ 5 years old, medication overdoses are the most common.¹ Annually, more than 71,000 children under the age of 19 present to emergency rooms for unintentional overdoses of prescription and over the counter drugs.² The problem can add to drug abuse in young adults aged 18-25 (5.9%) while 3% of teens (12-17yrs) have the second highest rate.³ So called "pharm parties", social gatherings where prescription drugs are consumed with alcohol, have gained popularity in recent years in both age groups.^{3,4}

In partnership with the Narcotics Enforcement Division, the DKICP has participated in annual Drug Take Back events since 2012. In 2014, our efforts to quantify and describe the types of returned medications were published in the Hawai'i Journal of Medicine and Public Health.⁵ In two large drug take back events at the annual Good Life Senior Expo (3 days) and 9 one-day events on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island, a total of over 8000 pounds of medications were recovered. Seven of the top 10 types of medications were classified as cardiovascular agents. The most common non-prescription medications included aspirin, naproxen and ibuprofen. Controlled substances comprised 10% of the returned medications; the most common was the combination hydrocodone/acetaminophen medications (CII). The DEA also continues to hold annual drug take back events.

References

1. Schillie SF, Sheab N, Thomas KE, Budnitz DS, Medication overdoses leading to emergency department visits among children, *A. J. Pre. Med.* 2009; 37(3):181-7.
2. Epidemic Responding to America's Prescription Drug Crisis. Executive Office of the President of the United States (2011)
3. Prescription Drug: abuse and Addiction Adolescents and young adults. National Institute on Drug Abuse
4. Leinwand D. Prescription place in teen culture. *USA Today.* June 13, 2006
5. Ma, CS, Batz, F, Taira Juarez, D, Ladao, L, Drug Take Back in Hawai'i: Partnership Between the University of Hawai'i Hilo College of Pharmacy and The Narcotics Enforcement Division. *HJMPH* 2014;73:1(26-31)