



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Health
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by

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and

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HB 1272 – 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). University of Hawai'i at Hilo fully supports this bill with the proposed amendments that authorize certain pharmacies to collect prescription drugs for disposal via collection receptacles or mail-back programs; and prohibits pharmacies from redispensing or returning prescription drugs that have been returned for disposal.

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 annually.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 and annually we hold Drug Take Back events during our DKICP Annual Health Fair in Hilo. In 2014, we published in the Hawai'i Journal of Medicine and Public Health, our efforts to quantify and describe the types of returned medications.⁵ In two large drug take back events at the annual Good Life Senior Expo (3 days) and nine, 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 Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) also continues to hold successful annual drug take back events and there are 10 drug return kiosks in the police stations on Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island. However, there remains need for additional mechanisms to return unused medications.

We support this initiative and appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

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)