

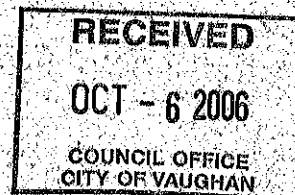


F.Y.I.

HUMBER WATERSHED ALLIANCE

October 3, 2006

Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Maple, ON L6A 1T1



Dear Councillor Frustaglio:

Re: Safe Disposal of Pharmaceuticals

I am writing to you on behalf of the Humber Watershed Alliance, an organization that includes residents, interest groups, business associations, elected representatives from the local and regional municipalities in the Humber River watershed, agency staff and the Chair of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). One of the roles of the Alliance is to inform and educate people on issues affecting the health of the Humber watershed and to encourage action to remedy the situation.

At the July 18, 2006 meeting of the Humber Watershed Alliance, concerns were raised by members regarding the improper disposal of pharmaceuticals by many residents. As a result, the following resolution was adopted by the Humber Watershed Alliance:

THAT TRCA staff check the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) website and that a letter be sent to major pharmaceutical companies and the City of Toronto and Region of Peel and York requesting that they increase public awareness of the serious health and environmental risks caused by improper disposal of pharmaceutical drugs and to promote the methods and locations where expired or unused drugs can be taken for safe disposal.

AND FURTHER THAT information on the proper disposal of pharmaceutical drugs be sent to all Councillors within the Humber watershed in order that this information can be passed along to their constituents through their regular newsletters.

According to Health Canada, there is growing evidence that improper disposal of unused or expired prescription and non-prescription drugs (e.g. throwing them into the garbage or flushing them down the sink or toilet) is having a harmful effect on the environment as this waste can contaminate groundwater and natural watercourses and soil. It can also act as an endocrine disruptor, which can be harmful to the growth, development and reproduction of aquatic species.

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The Alliance is aware of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's recent proposal to include pharmaceuticals as designated household hazardous or special waste material under the Ontario Waste Diversion Act. We understand that once this happens, Waste Diversion Ontario will implement a diversion plan that will include safe disposal of pharmaceuticals. The Alliance is urging the Ministry to act quickly and further, to ensure that any diversion plan include the need for effective public education and awareness programs.

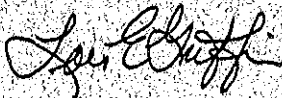
According to the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA), increasing public awareness through advertising and promotion of the service is one of the key elements for a successful drug disposal program. Information on the benefits of safe disposal, proper disposal methods and locations for disposal, needs to be disseminated effectively to ensure public participation in a proper disposal program. We believe that one way for publicizing a disposal program would be to include this information every time a person has a prescription filled.

The Alliance applauds the efforts of pharmacies such as Shoppers Drug Mart and the Rexall group, which have introduced a drug disposal program. We are also aware that some municipalities accept pharmaceuticals as part of their household hazardous waste collection program. The Alliance also commends the leadership that the Region of York has taken in initiating public awareness campaigns for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste. The Region of York has been advertising in print media, on buses, and through mail outs to residents, as well as hosting a household hazardous waste drop-off day.

Despite all of these efforts, the majority of the public is still unaware of how to safely dispose of pharmaceuticals, or of the environmental and health threats that improper disposal may pose. Therefore the Humber Watershed Alliance requests that as a municipality within the Humber watershed, you assist in this serious issue by publicizing to your residents the serious health and environmental risks caused by improper disposal of pharmaceutical drugs and by promoting the methods and locations where expired or unused drugs can be taken for safe disposal. We ask that you also work with other key players such as pharmaceutical companies, the provincial and federal governments through the Ontario Ministry of Health, Health Canada, and Environment Canada to increase the number of drug disposal programs.

We appreciate your consideration, and urge you to give this matter your immediate attention. If you have any questions or require any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Gary Wilkins, Humber Watershed Specialist at Toronto and Region Conservation, at (416)661-6600, extension 5211 or gwwilkins@trca.on.ca. We await your favorable response.

Yours truly,



Lois Griffin, Chair
Humber Watershed Alliance

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