

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**SUPPORTING A SECURE, CONVENIENT)
MEDICINE RETURN PROGRAM TO REDUCE) RESOLUTION NO. 10-____
THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL)
IMPACTS OF UNWANTED MEDICINES)**

WHEREAS, drug overdose deaths have increased to surpass car accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in Washington State, and 40% of poisoning deaths involve prescription opioid pain relievers, as well as abuse of prescription pain killers ranks second, only behind marijuana, as the Nation's most prevalent illegal drug problem; and,

WHEREAS, abuse of medicines by teenagers is an growing problem, including abuse of prescription drugs such as painkillers, sleeping pills, over-the-counter drugs, and over half of the people using prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons obtained them from a friend or relative for free, and 15% of 10th graders in Washington who abused prescription pain relievers got them from their own home or someone else's home without permission; and,

WHEREAS, unwanted medicines left in the home could increase opportunities for drug abuse, drug diversion, and accidental poisonings; and,

WHEREAS, unwanted medicines disposed to sanitary sewer systems are not completely treated by the wastewater treatment facilities, and pharmaceuticals have been detected in the surface waters of Washington State and around the United States, and in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan areas affecting 41 million Americans; and,

WHEREAS, disposal of unwanted medicines to residential garbage is not secure and medicines in solid waste systems may end up in landfill leachate, which may be pumped to wastewater treatment facilities, eventually allowing pharmaceuticals to be released into the environment; and,

WHEREAS, the number and volume of pharmaceuticals prescribed to U.S. residents has increased dramatically in the past decade, and unused or unwanted quantities of prescription and over-the-counter medicines are projected to be substantial, with some studies estimating that between 30% and 80% of patients do not finish commonly prescribed medicines such as pain medicines, antibiotics, and beta blockers; and,

WHEREAS, pharmaceutical manufacturers currently operate and fund successful drug take-back systems in Canada and several countries in Europe, and a pilot medicine return project operating in Washington State since October of 2006 by Group Health Cooperative and Bartell Drugs has collected more than 27,000 pounds of unwanted household pharmaceuticals, demonstrating the demand and feasibility of such a system, and sheriff and police offices in several Washington counties and cities are operating drug take-back programs that collect and dispose of legally prescribed controlled substances; and,

WHEREAS, 2SHB 1165 will be carried forward and reintroduced for the 2010 legislative session; and,

WHEREAS, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee supports the passage of legislation creating a unused medicine take-back program;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that LEWIS COUNTY supports establishment of a convenient, safe, secure, and environmentally sound medicine return program for unwanted medicines from households through an internalized pharmaceutical manufacturer financing mechanism that covers the cost of collection, transportation, and hazardous waste disposal, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION this 25th day of January, 2010.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
L. Michael Golden, Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

By: Civil Deputy

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ATTEST:

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Karri Muir, Clerk of the Board

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