



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Judiciary  
Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 2:05 p.m., Rm 325

By  
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### HB 2237 – RELATING TO DRUG DISPOSAL

Chair Lee, Vice Chair San Buenaventura and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2237. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo supports this bill to establish a Drug Disposal Program through the Dept. of Attorney General, for prescription and over-the-counter drugs in a safe environment and in a friendly manner and also support the establishment of a Drug Disposal Special Fund.

In partnership with the Narcotics Enforcement Division (NED), the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy (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, a publication in the Hawai'i Journal of Medicine and Public Health, described the quantities and types of returned medications in these events. (Ma, CS, Batz, F, Taira Juarez, D. Ladao, L, Drug Take Back in Hawai'i: Partnership Between the University of Hawai'i at Hilo College of Pharmacy and The Narcotics Enforcement Division. HJMPH 2014;73:1(26-31)

In 2018 and 2019, the NED set up 10 drug return kiosks in the police stations on Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island. The DKICP has been working with NED to also quantify and describe the medication returns in these police station kiosks. Unpublished results indicate high utilization of these medication kiosks. In addition, the NED has a medication take back box at their Honolulu office and data suggests very high usage

Successful 2019 legislation yielded Act 183 that authorizes certain pharmacies to collect prescription drugs for disposal via secured collection bins. Soon after, Longs and CVS Health implemented medication take back boxes in their stores on O'ahu and Maui.

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) also continues to hold successful annual drug take back events twice yearly throughout the state.

Although medication take back events and kiosks provide an effective method to reduce the presence of medications in the home, the elderly or remotely rural citizen may not be able to take advantage of take back opportunities due to transportation or geographic challenges. Understanding these access issues the DKICP received grant funding from the Amerisource Bergan Foundation. The grant provides funding for our students and faculty to provide education on the hazards of unused medications and help with medication destruction using Dispose RX packets that were provided by the grant. DKICP has partnered with Hawai'i Pacific Health to dispense Dispose RX packets with every opioid prescription, allowing a patient to destroy any unused opioids in the pill bottle. On Oahu, faculty and students have provided education sessions and medication destruction events on a quarterly basis at two long-term care facilities and will be expanding soon to senior centers.

The various forms of medications can present a challenge to destruction or take back. Dosage forms such as liquids, patches, suppositories, may require a different method of destruction. Not all medications are packaged loosely in a prescription bottle. Many pharmacies now package individual pills in foil wrapped sleeves, or a daily medication regimen in one plastic envelope. Many elderly patients will bring these types of pill sleeves to our medication destruction events where we must individually pop out each pill into a container then utilize the Dispose RX packets.

Having a centralized Drug Disposal program may help to coordinate these various efforts to tackle the problem of collecting or destroying unused medications. There are significant costs associated with collection and transport of collected medication and medication destruction is labor intensive with manpower, equipment and transportation needs. The establishment of a fund would be helpful to make sure that mounting costs are not barriers to continue or expand different types of programs.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony and fully support this bill.