

Testimony of Ingrid Gillespie

President, Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN)

RE: HOUSE BILL 6439- AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSAL AND COLLECTION OF UNUSED MEDICATION.

Environment Public Hearing, February 25, 2013

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and esteemed members of the Environment Committee: my name is Ingrid Gillespie, and on behalf of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN), the association of the state's thirteen Regional Action Councils (RACs), I thank you for the opportunity to testify concerning House Bill 6439, which proposes the development and implementation of a program for the collection of unwanted pharmaceuticals. Specifically, Section 2 of the proposed legislation requires that the development of this program be spearheaded by the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) in consultation with the Division of State Police (within the Department of Emergency Management and Public Protection), the Connecticut Pharmacists Association and the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association.

Since September 2011 the Connecticut Prevention Network has worked with DCP in establishing a medication drop box program. The present state-wide program for the collection of unwanted pharmaceuticals, which is monitored by the Department, is a volunteer program where police departments interested in participating complete a registration process outlined on the DCP website.

To date twenty-seven police departments have medication drop boxes, two more are currently completing the registration process and several others have expressed interest in completing registration. We are encouraging other departments to also establish drop boxes, however, some police departments have chosen not to participate for a variety of reasons including:

- Lack of space (i.e., very small lobby space)
- Facilities not designed to accommodate the drop box in view of police personnel
- Inability to provide 24/7 monitoring (some stations are not open 24/7)
- Security concerns
- Start up and/or disposal costs (note that set up costs can usually be covered)
- A sense that biannual medication turn-in events may be sufficient

While it is our hope that more police departments will establish medication drop boxes, we do have some concerns about the underlying proposal. RACs currently assist police departments to identify sources of funding to purchase medication drop boxes. Nevertheless, some police departments are either unable to fund the continued disposal costs or have other practical concerns about hosting a medication drop box. We will continue to work with those communities to establish a safe, easy and efficient way for people to dispose of medications.

In fact, many participate in the biannual medication turn-in events sponsored by the DEA as an alternative to collecting unwanted pharmaceuticals on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about the current program. We are happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

Ingrid Gillespie
President, Connection Prevention Network
Director, Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council (LFCRAC)