

NACo Adopts Pharmaceutical Take-Back Resolution

July 28, 2009

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National Association of Counties Adopts Resolution on Producer Responsibility for Unwanted Medicines

Nashville, Tenn. (July 28, 2009) – The **National Association of Counties** (NACo), the country’s largest local government organization, today unanimously adopted a policy supporting producer responsibility for unwanted medicines.

The expense of taking back unused prescription and over-the-counter drugs would be handled by the pharmaceutical industry, without relying on state or local government funding.

“There are examples of successful take back programs in the U.S and Canada that benefit the health both of the environment and the population,” said **Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt** of Ramsey County, Minnesota, who introduced the proposal along with three commissioners from Washington State. “NACo’s adopting a product stewardship policy for the pharmaceutical industry is a great step forward.”

According to the [resolution](#) [2], the environmental and social problems created by the storing and disposing of unwanted medicines are numerous and complex. Leftover medicine may play a part in drug abuse and accidental poisonings. Disposing of these medicines contributes to ground and surface water contamination.

Athens, Georgia-based **Product Policy Institute** (PPI) helped develop Tuesday’s resolution on unwanted medicines. The non-profit institute works with local governments to advance comprehensive state policies focused on producer responsibility. Reinhardt is a PPI board member.

Last week, NACo attendees heard a presentation from PPI executive director Dr. Bill Sheehan on a **successful program in British Columbia** that makes brand-owners of pharmaceutical products sold there responsible for the safe management of unused medicines. Over 93 percent of licensed pharmacies in this province of 4.4 million people collect unused medications, with no fees to consumers, and turn them over to producers.

“The cost of this program in 2008 was a mere \$315,000, which was shared by pharmaceutical companies,” said Sheehan. “Like Europe and Canada, the U.S. can develop programs to cover the costs of collecting, transporting and disposing of these medicines. It’s imperative we do so.”

Commissioner Reinhardt has written and introduced **four previous NACo resolutions on product stewardship** that were readopted this year, including ones advocating producer responsibility for paint, electronics, and mercury-containing lamps.

The fourth resolution supports a framework approach to Extended Producer Responsibility. This system makes manufacturers primarily responsible for the life cycle impacts of their products.

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The NACo resolution on unwanted medicine return is posted at

<http://www.productpolicy.org/ppi/attachments/NACo-2009-Pharmaceuticals-resolution.pdf> [2]

About the National Association of Counties:

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. NACo's membership totals more than 2,000 counties, representing over 80 percent of the nation's population. For more information go to www.naco.org [5].

About the Product Policy Institute:

The Product Policy Institute (PPI) is a North American non-partisan, non-profit research, communication and educational organization promoting policies that advance sustainable production, consumption and good governance. Founded in 2003, PPI works with communities and their local governments to advocate for public policies that protect public health and safety and address climate change by encouraging waste prevention and clean production. PPI helped local governments establish Product Stewardship Councils in California, New York, Vermont and Texas and is currently working in other states. For more information, visit www.productpolicy.org [6].

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Links:

[1] <http://www.productpolicy.org/ppi-update/naco-adopts-pharmaceutical-take-back-resolution>

[2] <http://www.productpolicy.org/ppi/attachments/NACo-2009-Pharmaceuticals-resolution.pdf>

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[5] <http://www.naco.org>

[6] <http://www.productpolicy.org>