



# Safe Medicine Disposal for ME: 2010 Update, Review of Current Operations, and Future Plans

Presentation at the 2010  
International Symposium on Safe Medicine

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# Disclosure

- The presenters DO NOT have an interest in selling a technology, program, product, and/or service to CME/CE professionals.

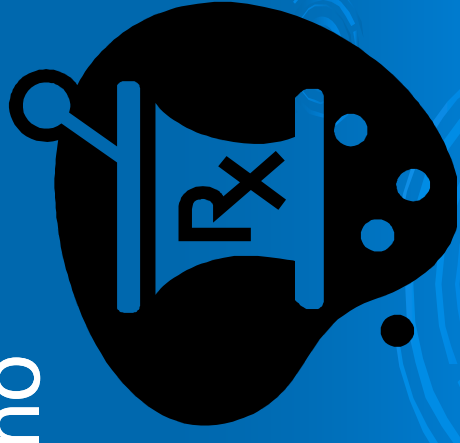


# Program Overview

- Statewide drug mailback program in Maine
- Funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and an allocation from the Fund for a Healthy Maine
- Phases I and II established a working prototype for state and beyond (considered our pilot phases)

# Program Model

- Postage-paid medicine return envelopes are distributed to selected pharmacies and organizations across the state at no cost
- Staff members then give the envelopes and an instruction packet to interested participants



# Program Model



Program Participants



Secure delivery to Maine Drug Enforcement Agency



Envelopes received, logged, catalogued and destroyed under MDEA custody

# Pilot Report Issued

- Report issued in April 2010
- Findings from research conducted from May 2008-December 2010

Reducing Prescription Drug Misuse  
Through the Use of a Citizen Mail-Back Program  
in Maine

**Safe Medicine Disposal for ME  
A Handbook and Summary Report**



Funded by the U.S. EPA Grant # CH-8336001-0

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Available online at  
[www.safemeddisposal.com](http://www.safemeddisposal.com)

# Summary of Pilot Accomplishments

- 9,400 envelopes distributed statewide
- 2,373 lbs of drugs collected
- Estimated Average Wholesale Price (AWP) of medicine collected: \$572,772.35
- 2,074 surveys collected and analyzed
- 2,777 telephone calls answered via the program helpline

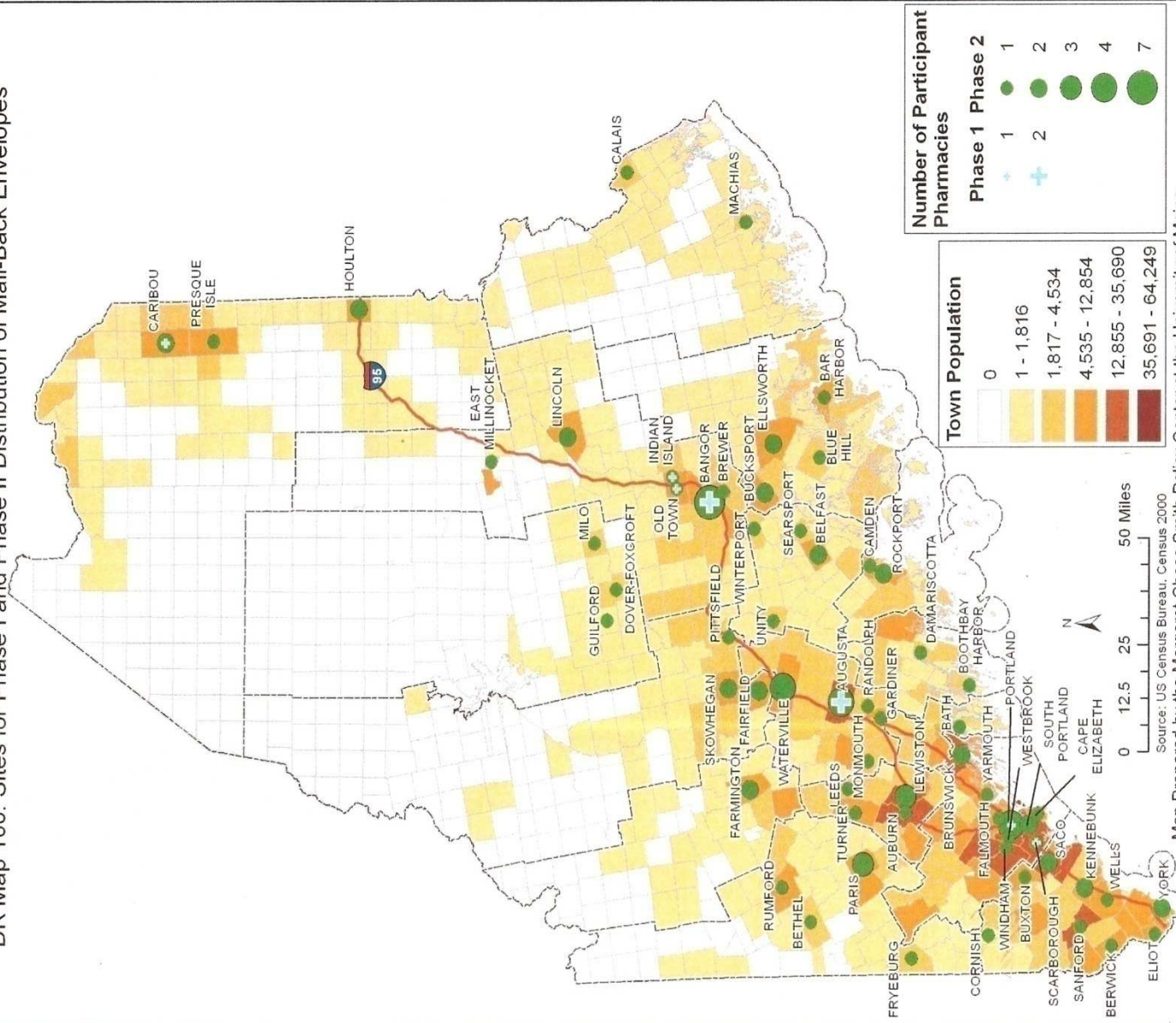
# Pilot Phases Drug Returns Data



- 3,926 envelopes collected
- 42% return rate
- 2,123 pounds of non-controlled drugs
- 250 pounds of controlled drugs
- Over 380,000 pills collected
- 86% of returns are prescription drugs, 12% over the counter
- 31% of returns included mail order drugs



DR Map 100: Sites for Phase I and Phase II Distribution of Mail-Back Envelopes



# Consumer Profile

- Average age of mailback program users:  
59 years of age
- Age range of users/those returning  
medicine through the mailback:  
4 years – 95 years of age
- Avg. age has dropped considerably from  
Phase I (avg. age = 70) to Phase II (avg.  
age = 59).

# Current Operations

- 20,000 mailers available through statewide network of participating pharmacies and partnering sites (approx. 150 sites)
- Program open to individuals of all ages
- Funding in place through 2011
- No expansion or new sites at this point in time



# Challenges

- Our greatest challenge and our greatest success....



- The sheer volume of our returns:
- Currently have 2,200lbs ready for disposal!

# Challenges



- Funding
  - \$75,000/yr budget
  - \$26,000 in donated time during the pilot phases

# Collaboration



➤ Husson University  
School of Pharmacy

➤ University of  
New England  
College of  
Pharmacy



Photo credits: Bangor Daily News

# Collaboration

- Local pharmacies including Miller Drug



- Donated time by community volunteers



# Future Directions

- Exploring funding opportunities through private partnerships and research grants
- Continue partnerships with pharmacy schools, community pharmacies, volunteers and support takeback events when possible
- Additional \$30,000 in funding from MDEA



# LE Perspective

- Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are increasing at alarming rates, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.
- In the United States, there are more current non-medical users of prescription controlled substances than the number of abusers of cocaine, heroin and hallucinogens (other than marijuana) combined.

# LE Perspective

- In 17 states, deaths from drugs — both prescription and illegal — now exceed those from motor vehicle accidents, with opiate painkillers playing a leading role.



# LE Perspective

- “We’re seeing people desperately and aggressively trying to get their hands on these pills,” said Janet T. Mills, the attorney general in Maine. “Home invasions, robberies, assaults, homicides, thefts — all kinds of crimes are being linked to prescription drugs.”



# LE Perspective

- 1 in 7 teens report using pills to get high in the past year and the presence of these unused drugs in the household is likely contributing to increasing rates of prescription drug abuse among teens who believe they are safer than “street” drugs.
- Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

# LE Perspective

- This initiative addresses this vital public safety and public health issue as medicines that collect in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse.
- Initiative will prevent increased pill abuse and theft by collecting potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs for safe and legal destruction.



# LE Perspective

- “It raises the awareness that we tend to hoard these drugs and hang onto them,” Steve Bullock, the attorney general in Montana said. “And raising that awareness is one more step in dealing with the overall problem.”



# Want to know more about the project?



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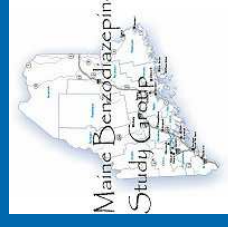
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