

## **Teleosis Institute Releases “Green Pharmacy Toolkit”**

*By Evin Guy, Teleosis Institute*

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### *Sharp Reduction in Pharmaceutical Pollution Possible*

Berkeley, CA – After safely collecting and disposing over 5,000 pounds of consumer pharmaceutical waste, the Teleosis Institute is pleased to release the Green Pharmacy Toolkit: A Guide to Creating an Environmentally Safe Medicine Disposal Program. The toolkit offers a step-by-step guide for any pharmacy, medical or dental clinic to implement a medicine take-back program, while effectively promoting environmental health and pharmaceutical safety.

A significant number of medicines from households go unused or expire, and there are few convenient and safe methods for disposing of them in the U.S. Unused medicines stored in the home or improperly disposed of often result in accidental poisonings, drug diversion or abuse, and environmental contamination. Medicines that are flushed down the drain are not removed by the wastewater treatment plants. Over 80% of waterways tested in the U.S. show traces of common medications and have the potential to impact aquatic organisms. The Green Pharmacy Program offers communities a safe and secure method for collecting and properly disposing of unwanted medicines.

According to Peter Koshland, Pharmacy Director at Elephant Pharmacy, “We are simply providing our customers a service in response to the increasing awareness of the environmental impacts of improperly disposed medications. The Green Pharmacy Program shows our patients that we put our environmental beliefs into action.”

The Green Pharmacy Toolkit is the first of its kind to offer instructions for developing, operating, and maintaining a permanent pharmaceutical take-back program. The toolkit includes extensive staff training and outreach materials as well as posters, brochures and access to the most up-to-date information on the ongoing research efforts of the Teleosis Institute’s Green Pharmacy Program. Sponsors of the Green Pharmacy Program include: Abbott Fund, Integrated Waste Control, Pharmaca Integrative Pharmacy, Elephant Pharm, Kaiser Permanente, and BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc.

“Teleosis gave Pharmaca the opportunity to put our environmental philosophy into practice. This partnership gave us the tools to educate customers about the responsible medication disposal. By expanding the program, Teleosis can help communities improve the health of our water resources dramatically” says Alexis Speros, communication Manager at Pharmaca Integrative Pharmacy. In November of 2008, Pharmaca announced a commitment to operate pharmaceutical take-backs in all of their 22 locations in the Western U.S.

Currently the Green Pharmacy Program is expanding from 15 pilot take-back sites [[www.teleosis.org/gpp-locations.php](http://www.teleosis.org/gpp-locations.php)] (at San Francisco Bay Area pharmacies, doctor and dental offices, veterinarian hospitals, health care facilities) to a national program that will enlist hundreds of locations throughout the United States. Staff at take-back sites screen for controlled substances, which are turned away because of current DEA restrictions. Medications collected at take-back sites are incinerated, currently the most environmentally safe method of destruction.

“I’m pleased to be able to expand our reach with the Green Pharmacy Toolkit” says Dr. Joel Kreisberg, executive director of the Teleosis Institute. “I believe this will have a significant impact on reducing pharmaceutical pollution while promoting health and safety for people and the environment.” The Green

Pharmacy Toolkit uses a product stewardship approach to “green” the pharmaceutical life-cycle and calls on all stakeholders to get involved. The Toolkit can be purchased online at [www.greenpharmacyprogram.com](http://www.greenpharmacyprogram.com).

About The Teleosis Institute:

The Teleosis Institute is an educational non-profit organization devoted to reducing the environmental impact of health care. The Institute promotes sustainable medical practices and works in partnership with the health care community to build a movement for positive social and environmental change. Our programs and educational materials include: The Green Health Care Program, The Green Pharmacy Program, and Leadership Training in Green Health Care. [www.teleosis.org](http://www.teleosis.org)

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The Teleosis Institute is dedicated to reducing healthcare’s environmental footprint by developing effective, sustainable health care programs provided by professionals who serve as environmental health stewards.

Category	Medical, Environment, Business
Tags	pharmaceutical disposal, medicine take-back, drug disposal, green healthcare, sustainable medicine, water
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