

Teleosis Institute Launches SF Bay Area Green Pharmacy Coalition

By Teleosis Institute

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First-ever coalition of hospital, long-term care, hospice, veterinary, health clinic and pharmacy professionals is formed around goal of zero pharmaceutical waste

Berkeley, CA – The Teleosis Institute is leading the formation of a bold new coalition of pharmacists, physicians, dentists, veterinarians, nurses, and other health care providers to achieve zero pharmaceutical waste here in the San Francisco Bay Area. Teleosis, a program of Practice Greenhealth, is working directly with local institutional stakeholders including hospitals, long-term care facilities, veterinary clinics, hospice services, health clinics and pharmacies throughout the Bay Area in an effort to gain control over pharmaceutical waste and disposal.

“Our initiative is unique in that it catalyzes key stakeholders—the institutions that handle and dispense pharmaceuticals directly to patients and consumers—in an effort to broaden the reach of existing pharmaceutical stewardship,” said Dr. Joel Kreisberg, Senior Director of the Teleosis Institute. “The San Francisco Bay Area Green Pharmacy Coalition is essentially a product stewardship program with the goal of including all players in eliminating the pollution caused by the improper disposal of unused pharmaceuticals.”

The SF Bay Area Green Pharmacy Coalition will create safe and secure methods for collecting and properly disposing of unused drugs, for consumers as well as patients in healthcare facilities. Medicines that are flushed down the drain are not removed by the wastewater treatment plants, which has led to traces of common medications in over 80% of waterways tested in the U.S.

“The Coalition’s goal of zero pharmaceutical waste requires both solid waste minimization as well as proper disposal within institutions,” said Dr. Kreisberg. “This is effectively achieved by engaging all the primary stakeholder communities in health care, as well as educating pharmacists, physicians, dentists, veterinarians, nurses, and allied health care staff to the benefits of a zero waste constraint,” he added.

The San Francisco Bay Area Green Pharmacy Coalition’s goals are to:

- Reduce exposures to pharmaceuticals through collaborative action at the local level.
- Help communities gain an understanding of all the major sources of exposure to pharmaceuticals.
- Work with communities to set priorities for risk reduction activities.
- Create self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that will continue to improve the local environment.

The Coalition depends on the involvement of a multitude of community members and organizations to support the goal of zero pharmaceutical waste in our environment. Regional and local governmental agencies, local utility agencies, environmental and public health agencies, professional associations, pharmaceutical manufacturers and medical waste transporters are all part of a complete solution to a potentially very big problem. Dr. Kreisberg says, “If we don’t start managing the waste stream now, we’ll be facing a much larger problem, because as the population ages they use more and more pharmaceuticals. It’s best we start by developing healthy institutional systems for dealing with medical waste.”

For more information on the SF Bay Area Green Pharmacy Coalition, visit www.teleosis.org/gpp-coalition.php or contact Evin Guy, Program Manager, at evin@teleosis.org.

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About The Teleosis Institute:

Teleosis Institute is an organization dedicated to reducing healthcare's footprint while broadening its ecological vision. Teleosis believes in a health care system that conserves natural resources, promotes personal wellness, and begins with precaution. At the forefront of this sustainable medical system are health providers who take an active role in greening healthcare through example, education and advocacy.

www.teleosis.org

Teleosis is a program of Practice Greenhealth. www.practicegreenhealth.org

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Email [Click to email author](#)

Phone 510-558-7285

City/Town Berkeley

State/Province California

Country United States