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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Jim Bohl  
(414) 286-2219

Ald. Michael J. Murphy  
(414) 286-3763

## **Drug mail-in initiative will make it easy to dispose of unused meds**

*Multifaceted first-of-its-kind in the nation city partnership aimed at opioid and heroin epidemic; includes CVS Pharmacy, MMSD, City of Cudahy, DOJ, DEA, US Bank and USPS*

The City of Milwaukee-CVS Pharmacy-MMSD **Drug Mail Back Program** – the first of its kind in the U.S. – will be announced on **Thursday, December 1** at a northwest side Milwaukee CVS Pharmacy location.

**Alderman Jim Bohl**, the primary sponsor of legislation creating the **Drug Mail Back Program**, said the free program is an easy and direct way of making it convenient for the public to dispose of unused, unwanted or surplus medications. Through the program, postage-paid drug disposal envelopes will be available to the public at 10 Milwaukee area CVS Pharmacy locations, through the Milwaukee and Cudahy Police Departments and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's (MMSD) main office on Seebooth Street. Alderman Bohl will host a **news event** announcing the program at the CVS Pharmacy at 7550 W. Perkins Pl. (**one block north of Capitol Drive on 76th Street, in Milwaukee**) at **10 a.m. on December 1**.

Alderman Bohl will be joined by representatives from the program's various partners, including the **City of Cudahy** (Mayor John Hohenfeldt), the **Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District** (Executive Director Kevin Shafer), the Milwaukee and Cudahy Police Departments, the state **Department of Justice**, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (**DEA**), the U.S. **Postal Service**, **CVS Pharmacy** (VP **Tom Davis**), and **US Bank**. Legislation co-sponsor **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, **Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton**, **Bevan K. Baker**, commissioner of the Milwaukee Health Department, and city **Treasurer Spencer Coggs** will also be in attendance.

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## Drug Mail Back Program/ADD ONE

The Drug Mail Back Program, according to Alderman Bohl, is a voluntary first-of-its-kind partnership linking government and private entities in an effort to reduce the chances of unused or unwanted prescription drugs from adding to the area's and the nation's deadly heroin and opioid abuse epidemic.

"The epidemic knows no boundaries, and is indiscriminate in taking the lives of people across all social and economic classes," Alderman Bohl said. "We need unique partnerships and new approaches across all sectors to fight it, and we need all hands on deck working together if we are to truly make an impact."

"The Drug Mail Back Program is a new tool, supported by multiple partners, that can help us keep prescription painkillers and other drugs out of the hands of our children and those who might use them the wrong way," Alderman Bohl said.

Wisconsin Attorney General **Brad Schimel** voiced his strong support for the initiative. "DOJ, with the help of the DEA and local law enforcement partners, has destroyed more than 200,000 pounds of unused medications over the last two years. I'm pleased DOJ can provide for the disposal of these drugs and confident our new partnership with the City of Milwaukee, MMSD, and CVS will result in the prevention of additional prescription medication diversions and drug overdoses," Mr. Schimel said.

Alderman Murphy, a strong advocate in the fight against heroin and opioid addiction, said it is "incredibly gratifying" to launch the Drug Mail Back Program after two years of discussions, finding and securing funding sources, and obtaining requisite approvals at the federal and local levels.

"In addition to providing locations for the dissemination of mail back envelopes, CVS Pharmacy has generously provided funding for envelopes and printing, and the City of Milwaukee paid for the establishment of the mailing accounts," Alderman Murphy said. "Importantly, MMSD is proudly funding the program's mailing costs, and US Bank is absorbing ongoing banking costs for the tallied mailed envelopes that require accounting in the program."

"CVS Pharmacy is proud to partner with the City of Milwaukee to create this innovative new program to increase convenient access to safe medication disposal for the community," said **Tom Davis**, R.Ph., Vice President of Pharmacy Professional Services at CVS Pharmacy. "We are dedicated to helping the communities we serve address and prevent drug abuse and we believe this public-private partnership will have a meaningful impact."

The **Drug Mail Back Program** will utilize free, tamper-proof mail back envelopes that will be made available to residents at ten local CVS Pharmacy locations in Milwaukee and Cudahy, at MMSD's administrative office, and in Milwaukee and Cudahy police department precincts, as part of a **two-year pilot program**.

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## **Drug Mail Back Program/ADD TWO**

Under the program, residents will use envelopes pre-addressed to their local police department (Milwaukee or Cudahy) to mail back their unwanted/unused prescription drugs, getting them out of medicine cabinets where they might otherwise be abused or misused, and also preventing improper disposal methods that might otherwise harm our waterways or landfills.

Residents will be asked to empty contents of their unwanted prescription pills into the secure envelope, seal it and place it in the mail. The empty plastic prescription vials can then be recycled.

Returned drugs will be stored by the Milwaukee and Cudahy Police Departments, and coordinated runs will be made through the DEA's office and Wisconsin Department of Justice to have the drugs incinerated. USPS mailing processes will enable participating communities the ability to track locations and weight content of returned drugs.

“Making it easier for people to properly dispose unused pharmaceuticals will help get more drugs off the street and out of the environment,” said **Kevin Shafer**, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. “You should not flush or pour old medicine into the sewer system. Our water reclamation facilities are not designed to remove them and they can end up in Lake Michigan.”