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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 517 Testimony – Take It Back MD Act
March 2nd, 2023
House Health and Government Operations Committee

Good afternoon Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, Esteemed Colleagues. Thank you for the opportunity to present today on my legislation – Take It Back MD Act.

When unused medicines are left in medicine cabinets, drugs can pose a hazard to our community and our families by causing accidental overdoses and exacerbating our opioid crisis. When unused medicines are dumped down the drain, it can also have a devastating impact on the environment and wildlife.

Given the data and current availability of “take back” programs or drop boxes, we believe that the current infrastructure of take back programs does not require a full overhaul at this time. In consultation with community stakeholders and the pharmaceutical we are pivoting to focus on the lack of education and awareness around these programs that hinders their success and wider use.

As such, I’m currently working with all interested stakeholders to develop a sponsor amendment to create a workgroup chaired by Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to study the existing DTB infrastructure, identify any gaps in the system, explore the need for a public drug take back education campaign, and develop the nature and focus of any desired campaign. The needs assessment would view the drug disposal system through a geographic, racial, and equity lens. The workgroup would consist of members from industry, retailers, pharmacists, police, public health, MDH, and MDE and would likely be funded by a fee on industry.

This bill and work is supported by product stewardship organizations, environmental advocates, and addiction advocates. I look forward to working with these representatives as well as the pharmaceutical industry to develop a plan to reduce accidental overdoses and the polluting of Maryland’s natural beauty. Including our sponsor amendment, I would ask for a favorable report on HB 517.