

From: Cheryl Nenn [mailto:Cheryl_nenn@milwaukeekeeper.org]

Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2018 2:55 PM

To: Murphy, Michael (Alderman); Donovan, Robert; Perez, Jose; Witkowski, Terry; Lewis, Chantia; Borkowski, Mark

Cc: Jonathan Richards

Subject: Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting on Thursday

Ald. Murphy and Members of the Public Health and Safety Committee—

We support City funding for the Take Back My Meds Coalition, of which we are a part. We understand that the City/County Opioid Task Force approved funding this initiative unanimously, which would fund drop box locations for unused prescription drugs. Providing safe drug disposal options is not only essential for protecting our community from the opioid epidemic, but also helps reduce the amount of prescription medications and pharmaceuticals that end up in our rivers and Lake Michigan. These drugs in our environment can act as endocrine disrupters and/or can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life in other ways. They also can contribute to antibiotic resistance, harm aquatic plants and other habitat, and cause other ecological and public health problems.

For your information, as part of a separate project, we are finding these pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and other substances in local rivers and Lake Michigan, which is the source of our drinking water supply. This monitoring project is a collaborative project between Milwaukee Riverkeeper, University of Wisconsin School of Freshwater Sciences, the UWM Zilber School of Public Health, Carroll University, and the Urban Ecology Center. We are currently working on a website with all of the results from that work. I'll attach a PDF of a recent presentation for your information. The most likely source of prescription meds to our rivers is failing sanitary sewers and septic systems, as well as treated wastewater, as our sewage treatment plants were not developed to remove these types of chemicals from wastewater and many pass straight through to our waterways. Educating people to not dump drugs down the toilet and to safely dispose of them with drop boxes or via mail order envelopes (like those available at Milwaukee Fire Stations), is a good first step to helping address this problem. The other solution involves major reconstruction of failing sanitary and storm sewers, which is the long-term solution to protect public health from untreated sewage and other contaminants.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for supporting drug take-back programs!

Best,

Cheryl Nenn

[Cheryl Nenn](#) Riverkeeper

Milwaukee Riverkeeper

phone: 414.287.0207 x2 direct: 414.431.0903

w: www.milwaukeekeeper.org e: cheryl_nenn@milwaukeekeeper.org

a: 1845 N Farwell Avenue, Suite 100 | Milwaukee, WI 53202

