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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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October 21, 2010

Ald. Jim Witkowiak  
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## Prescription Drug Disposal Legislation Passed by Council Committee

*Measure aimed at cracking down on prescription fraud, drug dealing*

Milwaukeeans disposing of empty prescription containers would be required to either remove the name and address of the person the drug is prescribed to, as well as the prescription number and drug name, or obliterate that information on the label prior to disposal, under a proposed ordinance approved today by a Common Council committee.

The **Public Safety Committee** voted 4-1 to recommend adoption of Council file #100334, legislation prompted by a significant rise in fraudulent attempts to fill drug prescriptions – especially strong pain medications – using discarded containers, according to the file’s author, **Alderman Jim Witkowiak**.

“People are going through dumpsters and garbage carts looking for prescription drug containers that still have the name and address on them, and then they go to great lengths to try getting certain medications refilled by passing themselves off as the person named on the bottle,” Alderman Witkowiak said.

Automated refill services (using numbers provided either by telephone or email) offered as a convenience to pharmacy customers have actually helped fuel the rise in prescription fraud, Alderman Witkowiak said.

The alderman compared the proposed law to laws pertaining to the disposal of hazardous chemicals and materials. “When governments first began using regulations and ordinances pertaining to the disposal of hazardous materials and chemicals, it took some time for people to find out what they needed to do,” he said.

“This legislation includes a strong public education provision, because if the file is passed by the full Common Council on November 3, we want people to be informed and know how they can comply and why it’s important for them to comply,” he said.

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## **Drug Container Disposal Ordinance/ADD ONE**

According to the file, the ordinance does not apply to any prescription drug collection program sponsored by a government entity or nonprofit organization, or to prescription drug containers disposed of by hospitals or pharmacies. Any person violating the ordinance would be subject to fines ranging from \$25 to \$500 for the first offense and from \$50 to \$500 for each subsequent offense.

If approved by the full Council on November 3 and signed by the mayor, the ordinance would go into effect on November 20.

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