



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAGINAW COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS PROPER DISPOSAL OF NEEDLES

Accidental needle-stick injuries can transmit blood-borne pathogens like Hepatitis B or C and HIV/AIDS. Nationwide, it is estimated that 7.8 billion needle injections occur outside of medical facilities. The majority of these injections occur in personal residences to treat illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, hepatitis, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, psoriasis, and osteoporosis.

Detailed information on the proper disposal of household needles (sharps) can be found at www.safeneedledisposal.org. Without clear and proper instructions for the disposal of sharps, citizens can be confused as to how to properly discard of their used sharps. Some residents are storing old used sharps in their homes, some are disposing of the used sharps loosely in the County's solid waste system, and others are leaving their sharps in their recycling bins. None of these options are acceptable. The improper disposal of sharps is a health and safety hazard.

The easiest way to properly dispose of used household sharps is to place them in an impervious container such as a laundry bottle or coffee can, write "Do Not Recycle – Sharps" on the container, and place it into your regular trash. Soda and water bottles are too thin and should not be used for this purpose.

If you are unable to dispose of your sharps in this manner, the Saginaw County Health Department (SCHD) Environmental Health Services Division will accept them for disposal at 1600 N. Michigan Avenue, Saginaw, Michigan, in Room 101. Any sharps that are dropped off must be contained in an impervious container to protect the safety of county personnel and

others. These containers will then be collected and permanently disposed of in the safest manner possible.

This service is intended for individuals only and may not be used by businesses, medical clinics or other programs.

According to Jerry Maxson, Environmental Health Specialist II, “Hypodermic needles that contain medications (such as Epi Pens) may be dropped into any of the county’s 13 ‘Unwanted Medication’ drop boxes. Place them into a small (3 cups or less), impervious container with ‘Sharps’ marked on the outside. Containers bigger than this size will not fit into the collection boxes.”

The “Unwanted Medication” boxes are located in local police stations in Buena Vista, Frankenmuth, Hemlock, Saginaw County Sheriff’s Office, Saginaw Township, Saginaw City, Spaulding Township, St. Charles, Thomas Township, Freeland, Saginaw Valley State University, and Delta College, as well as at SCHD.

Maxson says, “Together, we can ensure the safe disposal of sharps in our community.” For more information, please contact Jerry Maxson by phone at (989) 758-3685 or e-mail at jmaxson@saginawcounty.com.

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