



GRANT WILL CREATE EASY “SHARPS” COLLECTION

Program will provide safe, convenient management of hypodermic needles and other sharps

Contacts: Beth Gabor, Yolo County Public Information Officer
530.666.8042 (o) 530.219.8464 (c)

Heidi Sanborn, CPSC Executive Director
916.480.9010 (o) 916.402.3911 (c)

Woodland, Calif. (April 27, 2009) – Yolo County and the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) are working to keep home-generated sharps out of State landfills, thanks to a generous grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). The State's leading authority on recycling and waste reduction awarded the project \$197,680 to create full-circle, “cradle to cradle” programs that design convenient collection procedures for hypodermic needles and other sharps.

Every year more than 355 million home-generated sharps are disposed in California by people using injectable medication to treat diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, migraines, infertility, blood disorders, and for those who medicate pets and livestock. Historically, most of these sharps have been discarded with common waste in garbage cans, recycling bins and even flushed down toilets because most communities lack safe, convenient collection programs. To address the public health dangers of needle sticks to sanitation workers, children and the general public, State legislators passed SB 1305, which made this type of disposal illegal as of September 2008.

“SB 1305 was the first step to address the sharps disposal problem in California. The next integral step is what the California Integrated Waste Management Board is doing by providing the funding essential to create and implement convenient take-back programs that divert sharps from landfills,” said Heidi Sanborn, CPSC executive director. “It is imperative that we educate the public on responsible recycling. Making producers ultimately responsible for this waste is the next phase.”

CPSC is providing outreach and education about Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), also known as Product Stewardship, in California. EPR is a policy approach to place a shared responsibility for end-of-life product management on the producers, and all entities involved in the product chain, instead of the general ratepayers; while encouraging product design changes that minimize a negative impact on human health and the environment at every stage of the product's lifecycle. Implementing EPR programs presents an opportunity for the producers of pharmaceuticals that require sharps to inject drugs and the companies who make sharps to take responsibility for these products at end-of-life.

Under the grant, CPSC will provide outreach and education about EPR to the cities of Davis, Woodland, West Sacramento and Winters and help each jurisdiction incorporate product stewardship into their green purchasing policies. CPSC will also help develop educational materials for the sharps collection program.

Yolo County will soon make free drop-off and mail-back containers available to sharps users to easily recycle their used sharps. This program will serve as a trial to determine the disposal method most preferred by sharps users. Sharps containers will be distributed at public locations, such as the Yolo County Central Landfill, Davis Senior Center and area pharmacies. For a complete listing of locations and hours of operation please visit the Yolo County website at www.yolocounty.org, under the landfill tab.

For more information about the program contact Marissa Juhler, Yolo County Integrated Waste Management: 530.666.8813 or Heidi Sanborn, CPSC Executive Director: 916.480.9010. For more information about how EPR is working in California go to www.calpsc.org. For more information about CIWMB go to www.ciwmb.ca.gov.