



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### COUNTY EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR SHARPS PROGRAM

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce it has been awarded the Program Excellence Award from the North American Hazardous Materials Management Association (NAHMMA) for its groundbreaking drug and sharps takeback program.

The first program of its kind in the nation, the County's Drug and Sharps Takeback Program allows residents to bring used needles and leftover medicines to any pharmacy for free and safe disposal. Adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2015, it was the first program in the U.S. to require pharmacies to accept such materials, helping prevent them from entering the waste stream or being improperly discarded.

"Requiring manufacturers and businesses to be responsible for the waste their products generate is good public policy," Santa Cruz County Resource Planner Tim Goncharoff said. "It helps keep our environment and beaches clean, and we're pleased our ordinance has become a model for communities across the U.S."

Each year thousands of pounds of drugs and millions of needles are collected and disposed of, and the pharmaceutical industry pays all the expenses. Santa Cruz County's program served as a model for numerous other programs and formed the basis of the new state law (SB 212) which will establish a program statewide by 2021.

The national award was presented at the North American Hazardous Materials Management Association annual meeting in Maine.

More info is available at <https://med-project.org/locations/santa-cruz-county>.