



Washington State
Health Care Authority

Pharmacy Safe Storage Program

Research with Washington residents shows that although people know they should lock up their medications, only about 26% actually do. In 2020, the Washington State Health Care Authority piloted a pharmacy-based program to test whether making a personal commitment to lock up medications would influence consumer behavior.

The results underscore the power pharmacies have to encourage safe medication storage and return.

Kirk's Pharmacy locations in Puyallup and Eatonville participated in the pilot program by asking patients who received an opioid prescription if they had a way to lock it up, asking for their commitment to do so and offering a free locking bag if the customer needed one.



383

PEOPLE

were talked to
about the Safe
Storage program

352

PEOPLE

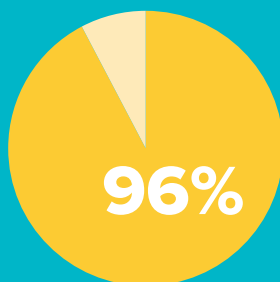
pledged to lock up
their medications

270

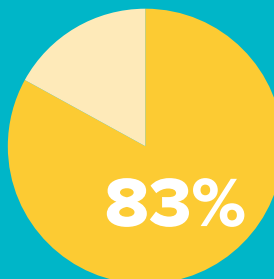
LOCKING BAGS

were distributed over
a three-month period

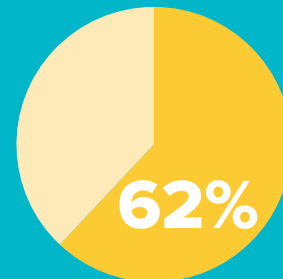
IN A FOLLOW-UP PHONE SURVEY WITH 83 PARTICIPANTS:



of respondents said
they committed to
locking up the
prescription.



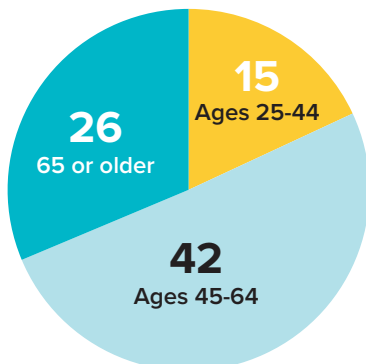
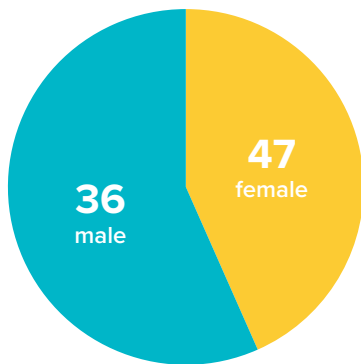
of respondents
who received a
locking bag used it.



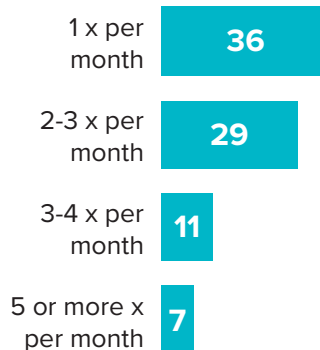
of respondents said the
conversation with their
pharmacist influenced
their behavior.

Survey Respondents

Total survey sample: **83** PEOPLE

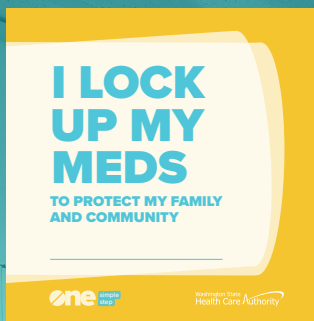


Frequency of Pharmacy Visits



Taking the Pledge to Lock up Opioid Prescriptions

96% of participants (80) took the pledge, 3 did not.



REASONS FOR TAKING THE PLEDGE:

1. I personally feel locking up medication is important.
2. My pharmacist encouraged me to.
3. I want to support my community.

REASONS FOR NOT TAKING THE PLEDGE:

1. I was in a hurry and didn't have time to make the pledge.
2. Locking up my medication is unnecessary.
3. No reason.

Locking up Medications

Of the 79 participants who received locking bags:

83%
(66) PARTICIPANTS

used it to store their prescription.

THOSE WHO DID NOT USE THE BAG:

1.

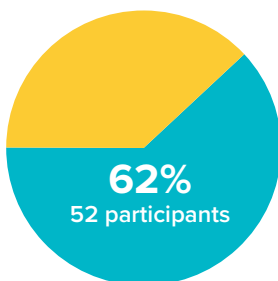
Did not think it was necessary.

2.

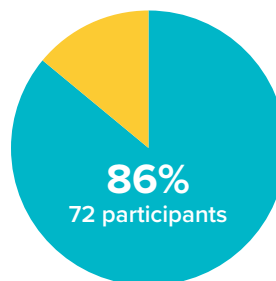
Own a safe or other locking device where they store medications.

3.

Decided not to use it to store medications.



said their **CONVERSATION WITH A PHARMACIST** encouraged them to commit to locking up prescriptions.



said they are now **"VERY LIKELY" TO LOCK UP** their medications.

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR LOCKING UP MEDICATIONS:

1.

To prevent young children from accidentally consuming them.

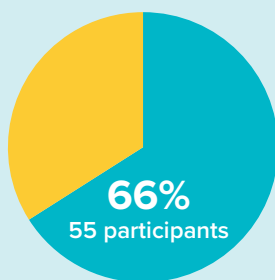
2.

To prevent theft.

3.

To prevent loved ones from misusing medications.

Medication Disposal



of participants said they take back unused prescriptions to a take back program.

Pharmacists play a key role in safe storage and safe disposal.

The pilot program highlights the leadership role pharmacists play in advising people about preventing opioid misuse. 75% of opioid misuse starts with people using medication that wasn't prescribed for them—usually taken from a friend or family member.

By having conversations about safe storage and safe disposal, pharmacists and pharmacy staff can make a big difference in keeping people safe and their communities healthy.

“If every pharmacy across Washington state participated in the safe storage program, we could make a significant impact in ensuring opioid medications are safely stored - therefore decreasing the risk of misuse and helping to substantially address the opioid epidemic.”

— Alicia Hughes, MA, CPP, Supervisor, Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Washington State Health Care Authority

“This program was a great resource to empower our customers to play an important role in minimizing opioid misuse in our community. Providing patients with a locking bag was a powerful way to help them overcome barriers for practicing safe medication storage.”

— Andrew Heinz, Pharmacist and Owner of Kirk's Pharmacy

Get Involved

Pharmacies across Washington can now participate in this free program!

The Washington State Health Care Authority is looking to expand the program to more pharmacies this year. Those who participate will receive:

- A supply of free locking bags to provide to patients who receive opioid prescriptions.
- Promotional materials including posters, informational rack cards, ready-to-use social media posts, eNews content and pledge forms.
- Promotion of your pharmacy's involvement within your market area through media relations and social media.
- Ongoing support to ensure a straight-forward and smooth implementation of the program.



**FOR INFORMATION
OR TO PARTICIPATE:**

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