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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Members of the House of Representatives
FROM: Representative John Hornaman
DATE: May 8, 2012
SUBJECT: Legislation Establishing the Pharmaceutical Stewardship Act

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation that would give consumers a means to dispose of unwanted pharmaceuticals through a convenient, efficient, and safe disposal program.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, from 1999 to 2009, the number of prescriptions dispensed in the United States increased from 2.8 Billion to 3.9 Billion. According to a study conducted by the Teleosis Institute of California, approximately 45% of these prescription drugs went unused. These unwanted pharmaceuticals are stored in medicine cabinets, disposed of with the household trash, or flushed down the toilet. Research conducted by the United States Geological Survey found traces of pharmaceuticals in water samples downstream from wastewater treatment plants where native fish populations exhibited low male-to-female sex ratios and fish having both female and male reproductive organs.

Government and environmental groups have periodically conducted one-day pharmaceutical collection events, similar to the "Keep Unwanted Medicine out of Lake Erie" program held in Erie County several years ago. While these programs have helped raise awareness of the problem, due to their infrequency and/or funding limitations, they are only able to capture a fraction of all unwanted pharmaceuticals. As such, it is clear that there is a need for a convenient, efficient, and safe disposal option for unwanted pharmaceuticals.

The legislation I will be introducing would establish a program to require that all manufacturers selling covered drugs in the Commonwealth participate in a pharmaceutical stewardship program. A manufacturer would operate their own program, participate in a program in conjunction with other manufacturers, or cooperatively establish an association to conduct a program.

Pharmaceutical stewardship programs establish a framework for manufacturers to accept responsibility in reducing the environmental impacts of their products. These programs include collection sites, mail-back options, safe-handling systems, and environmentally sound disposal methods for unwanted covered drugs from residential sources.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Carla Walker at 717-772-2297 or cwalker@pahouse.net.