



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 underscored the power pharmacies have to encourage safe medication storage and return.

Following the proven success of the pilot program, in 2021 the Pharmacy Safe Storage program was expanded to 20 pharmacies across eight counties. Over the course of a four month period, pharmacists asked their patients who received an opioid prescription if they had a way to lock up their medication, provided a free locking bag if they did not, and asked for their commitment to safely store their prescription.



1,586
PEOPLE

were talked to about the Safe Storage program

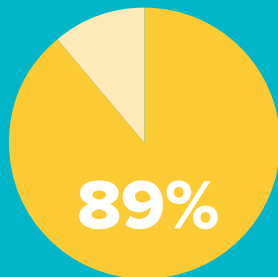
1,065
PEOPLE

pledged to lock up their medications

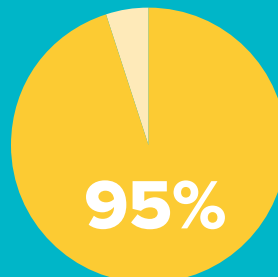
567
LOCKING BAGS

were distributed over a three-month period

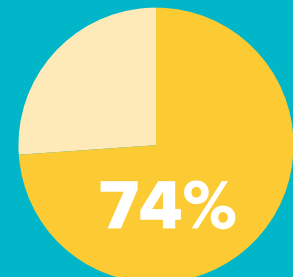
IN A FOLLOW-UP PHONE SURVEY WITH 57 PARTICIPANTS:



of respondents said they committed to locking up the prescription.



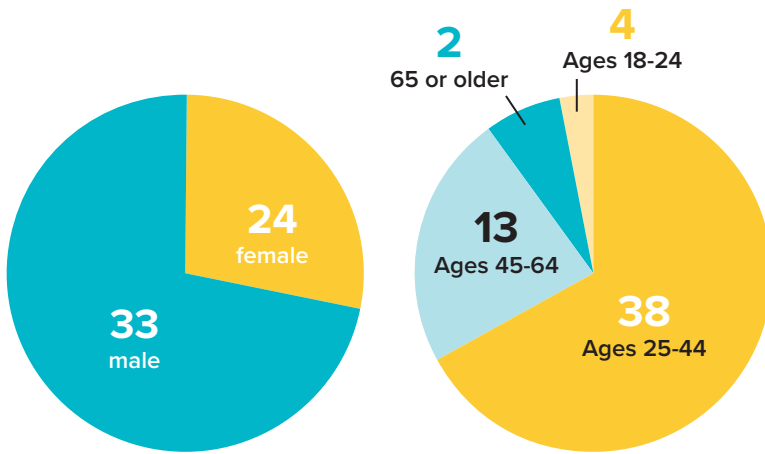
of respondents who received a locking bag used it.



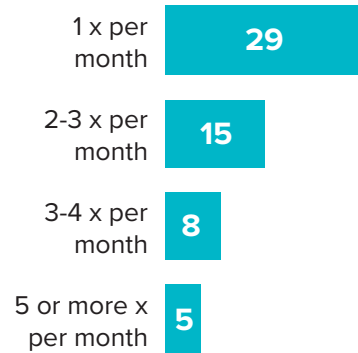
of respondents said the conversation with their pharmacist influenced their behavior.

Survey Respondents

Total survey sample: **57** PEOPLE

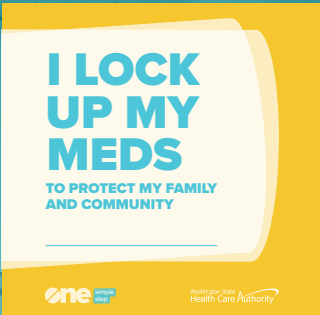


Frequency of Pharmacy Visits



Taking the Pledge to Lock up Opioid Prescriptions

89% of the surveyed participants took the pledge



REASONS FOR TAKING THE PLEDGE:

1. I personally feel locking up meds is important.
2. My pharmacist encouraged me to.
3. I want to support my community.
4. I have children living in my household.
5. A loved one struggled with prescription med use.

REASONS FOR NOT TAKING THE PLEDGE:

1. I was in a hurry and didn't have time to make the pledge.
2. I did not want to put my name on the wall.
3. I did not have a way to lock up my meds.

Locking up Medications

Of the 57 participants who received locking bags:

95%
(54) PARTICIPANTS

used it to store their prescription.

THOSE WHO DID NOT USE THE BAG:

1.

Did not think it was necessary.

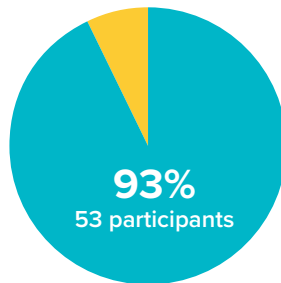
2.

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

3.

Did not think it was effective.

Creating a New Norm



said they are now **“VERY LIKELY”** or **“LIKELY” TO LOCK UP** their medications.

MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR LOCKING UP MEDICATIONS:

1.

To prevent young children from accidentally consuming them.

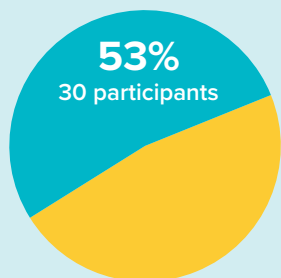
2.

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.

Get involved with the Pharmacy Safe Storage Program →

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

75% of opioid misuse starts with people using medication that wasn't prescribed for them—usually taken from a friend or family member. This program relies on the pharmacists' influence in their communities and highlights their ability to prompt patients to adopt healthy behaviors like locking up. This in turn helps to prevent opioid misuse.

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.

Get Involved

Pharmacies across Washington can participate in this free program!

Participating Pharmacies 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.
- Sign up at getthefactorsrx.com/pharmacy

“ 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

“ It was worthwhile to initiate a conversation with individuals regarding the importance of safe storage of their opioid medications. This is another great way that pharmacies can help out their communities and spread awareness. ”

– Catherine Nguyen, Clinical Pharmacist at Peninsula Community Health Services, Program Participant



**FOR INFORMATION
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