

California successfully installs 250 medication disposal bins across state

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The med bins are part of the state's Drug Take-Back Program, which sends unwanted or unused medications to waste-to-energy plants.

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[Posted by Haley Rischar](#)

The [California Department of Health Care Services \(DHCS\)](#) and the [California Product Stewardship Council \(CPSC\)](#), working through State Opioid Response (SOR) grant issued by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), have completed installation of approximately 250 safe medication disposal bins across California, expanding the statewide network of med bins for the public to use for free.

The med bins provide safe disposal of unwanted, unneeded, and/or expired medication and were provided as part of the federal grant-funded [California Drug Take-Back Program](#).

The program, which helps in keeping California communities safe from the harmful effects of opioids and other prescription drugs, includes detailed publications explaining how the public can use the med bins, a comprehensive med bin locator map and education around the benefits of using the med bins, such as:

- a convenient, safe, and anonymous disposal option for unused or expired medications;
- providing an alternative to stockpiling medications at home, as stockpiling can lead to accidental overdose by children, family, or visitors;
- helping prevent discarded drugs from being taken out of the trash or medication cabinets by others, which can lead to illegal drug use or sale;
- a reduction of problematic disposal methods, such as flushing medication down the toilet, which endangers the environment and can lead to pollution of our waterways (streams, rivers, and lakes) as wastewater treatment plants cannot completely remove drugs from wastewater; and
- complete destruction of medications through thermal combustion at [waste-to-energy plants](#).

“Due to the ongoing pandemic, this expansion of the med bin program couldn’t be more timely. Unused medications that are not disposed of properly can cause a myriad of serious public safety concerns,” said CPSC Executive Director Doug Kobold in a release.

“Fortunately, the network of med bins in California helps to solve issues related to the opioid crisis and, more particularly, a lack of safe and convenient disposal options. With the addition of these nearly 250 new med bins throughout the state, consumers are afforded more convenience within their own communities when they want to dispose of their unwanted meds.”

The program, which ended March 31, 2021, was funded by a \$3 million grant from DHCS through the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, which in turn was funded by SAMHSA under the SOR grant.