



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Bill Co-Sponsored by Addabbo to Encourage Safe Disposal of Excess Household Medications Passes Both Senate and Assembly, Awaits Governor's Approval

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 23, 2014

Queens, NY (June 23, 2014): In order to help ensure the safe disposal of leftover prescription and over-the-counter medications, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. has been pushing the Senate-approved legislation (S.6691) which would help encourage communities to work with appropriate government agencies to hold local Household Pharmaceutical Collection events.

“Most household medicine cabinets are home to at least a small supply of outdated, unused medications left over from previous illnesses, and they are difficult to dispose of properly,” said Addabbo. “When I have held my community recycling events in the district, I have been disappointed that I haven’t been able to help my constituents safely rid themselves of old prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Approval of this legislation, which I co-sponsor, may increase opportunities for this kind of collection event.”

Under the legislation (S.6691), the State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), in cooperation with the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), would be required to develop and post information on its website to raise public awareness of how to hold a household pharmaceutical collection event. In addition, the agencies would work to develop and promote a public information program on the proper disposal of drugs and the locations of drug disposal sites.

“Having leftover drugs hanging around the house is more than clutter and a nuisance; it can be a temptation and a danger for young kids and others who think they can get high on these medications or sell them,” said Addabbo, noting that a National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that one-third of people aged 12 and older who used drugs for the first time in 2009 began by using a prescription drug for non-medical reasons. “This same study found that more than 70 percent of those who abused prescription pain relievers got them from friends and relatives – most likely from the household medicine cabinet.”

Addabbo noted that medications that are flushed down toilets or placed in household trash may also ultimately leach into the ground and water supplies, causing negative environmental impacts.

“For public health and environmental reasons, we need to help New Yorkers safely dispose of old, expired medications that are not doing anyone any good, and that could potentially do someone some harm,” Addabbo said. “I hope this legislation will be signed into law by the Governor.”

In the meantime, Addabbo noted that useful information about safe drug disposal can be found at this State Department of Environmental Conservation link: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67720.html>