

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Misuse Prevention

Safe Disposal Work Group Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2026 – via Zoom

(The following minutes and discussion are for informational purposes only and do not represent the position of the University of Colorado.)

Present:

Sunny Linnebur and Becca Barnhart, Co-chairs
Aminta Bhutani, Drug Enforcement Administration
Georgia Babatsikos, Boulder County Health Department
CDPHE: Teresa Will, Jericho Dorsey, Terri Hurst
Consortium: Jen Place, Hilary Bryant, Jessica Eaddy, Shayna Micucci, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached list

Co-Chair Sunny Linnebur called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. and provided a brief background of the work group. She also introduced new co-chair Becca Barnhart, public health analyst with the CDC Foundation. Becca previously worked with the El Paso County Health Department.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the March 2025 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Overview of 2026 Strategy (Becca Barnhart & Sunny Linnebur):

2026 work group efforts will include increased community outreach focusing on proper syringe disposal, safe storage of prescription medications, training the trainer modules, community listening sessions, and key informant interviews. The work group will be more involved in the local grassroots levels across the state to ensure messaging is reaching all communities in the most effective way possible.

Community Household Sharps Disposal Discussion:

Terri Hurst works with Summit County Public Health, a Harm Reduction Program grantee with a medication collection box. Grant funds have helped with their program, but not through the Safe Disposal Program. Terri said she would follow up with Summit County to see if they need any assistance. Hilary Bryant offered to facilitate contact with Megan Vinet, who oversees the medication take-back program at CDPHE.

CDPHE also oversees a sharps program limited to certain metro areas. The program has proved difficult to administer due to collection boxes located in areas where the unhoused congregate and use them for trash.

Hilary said the Denver Department of Public Health (DDPHE) is in the process of launching a safe syringe disposal campaign. DDPHE shared useful data, including a map of Denver that tracks the location of discarded syringes. This geo-location assists with determining the best placement for disposal kiosks. DDPHE has also created a partner disposal toolkit. Becca

suggested that DDPHE could provide additional information about their campaign at a future work group meeting.

Georgia Babatsikos reported that Boulder County Health has been contacted by the public about syringe and medication disposal. Options in Boulder County are limited to hospitals or municipal waste. She is putting together a medical disposal handout and will be adding information about syringe disposal.

According to research conducted by Hilary and Becca, a majority of states around Colorado instruct the public to dispose of sharps by putting them in the trash inside thick plastic bottles. Since trash collection is primarily automated, needle sticks are no longer as much of a concern. There is still a major environmental issue related to syringe autoclaving, incineration, and grinding emissions. Hilary spoke about mandates involving producer responsibility for medication disposal exempting sharps since the producers would pass on the cost to patients.

Becca mentioned the possibility of having syringe disposal information tables or flyers at some of the drug take-back locations. Everyone agreed better syringe disposal messaging is necessary, including at the medical professional/pharmacy level.

Sunny summarized past efforts with partnerships such as the Colorado Pharmacist Society and the Colorado Veterinary Society and how those efforts might be expanded. She explained that drug take-back information is required to be provided to Medicare patients. The CMS website has links to take-back information, but sharps information is lacking. Sunny said information should be translated into Spanish.

Jessica Eaddy said there is a request and potential need for a syringe disposal kiosk in the Trinidad, Los Animas County area, but there may still be community controversy related to this. She suggested that more kiosks near harm reduction programs would be helpful.

Cary Ruble, CDPHE and former work group co-chair, indicated that some kiosks were underutilized or vandalized. Sunny suggested contacting Cary to see if some of the subject kiosks could be relocated to other areas since the program is experiencing budget cuts. Hilary added that, from what she understood from Cary, the high-volume boxes contribute to the cost overruns and moving low-volume boxes to a higher volume area might contribute to the overrun. A needs assessment might be in order.

Partner Announcements:

The next DEA drug take-back event will be held on April 25th. Aminta Bhutani said collections have been consistent, amounting to approximately 10,000 pounds. In the past five years, the highest amount collected was 15,000 pounds. <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>

The Keep the Party Safe Campaign contract was renewed with AEG.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at noon. The next work group meeting will be held on April 15, 2026 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon via Zoom.

Attachments: Work group roster

Links noted in Chat:

- DEA resource: <https://www.dea.gov/everyday-takeback-day>
- Sharps Takeback- <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dehs/medication-sharps-take-back>
- FAQ on Meds & Sharps Take Back: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dehs/medication-sharps-take-back/faq>
- Denver.gov Safe Sharps Disposal: https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Public-Health-Environment/Community-Behavioral-Health/Behavioral-Health-Support/Behavioral-Health-Initiatives/Overdose-Prevention/Safe-Sharps-Disposal?fbclid=IwY2xjawQC4ddleHRuA2FibQIxMABicmIkETJhc0UyZ1Y5MF11N1JHcHM5c3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHo8rufKUSzUP9v8qSKpjowIMjZjt2JtO7CgUNEzN5-CjUfTfO4MVJcs6kOd8_aem_pzVpjuZad1nXaeDCp07elg
- Needle Clipper for Syringe, Sharps Disposal Container Fit Home and Travel, Compatible with Sharps Metal Needle (Blue): https://www.amazon.com/Needle-Clipping-Clipper-Disposal-Container-Compatible/dp/B0DRWS52Z2/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=277CM92IA4KZ2&dib=eyJ2IjojMSJ9.Q4tpO5IC5_iuqdMJEaSIYoL1YjeaQjuSkRBxfUjyFgzH2jfyXwCs3WQJ JkCGSaTq7IOkoA9EQLaXYKuOcrdT1170S3j8sQdxO1ylwoE_BTpGCeNI9fZ521laNgmBj53W3H2HbA3qLp-akcVDstrlErFg-H0yBir7ZU0BKHC7686xrYQeNF2E_H-dMTPMNHZ-V8Ms86AMFRKhD72lzwiZx17zizPwDZuVEcG-XctpzQKVZNIxMIYSiJ9f2TEdw58ITwI2AcacEKrG4WKEejQrfoHCGaiABeg1XceK P7aqpDc.ZJzbs4As0BNw9atuluw44g5DMGA2B6bXr7x7nNyXHv4&dib_tag=se&keywords=syringe%2Bclipper&qid=1771438790&sprefix=syringe%2Bcli%2Caps%2C281&sr=8-1-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&th=1