DEA Final Rule: Disposal of Pharmaceutical Controlled Substances

The federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) adopted rules regarding the disposal of pharmaceutical controlled substances. The rules, effective on October 9, 2014, create regulations related to the disposal process for unused or unwanted controlled substances. The new federal rule allows Washington licensed pharmacies with Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission (commission)-approved take-back programs and protocols to expand collections to include controlled substances.

When Must A Facility Request Commission Approval?

- The facility holds a license issued by the commission.
- The commission hasn’t approved the facility to operate or participate in pharmaceutical take-back program.
- The facility has an approved take-back program, but wishes to place a collection receptacle at a long-term care facility.
- The facility has made substantive changes to the policies and protocol the commission originally approved.

Steps to Request Commission Approval

- Submit the drafted plan to the Washington State Pharmacy Commission.
- For consideration, submit the plan no later than six weeks before the commission meeting.
- Contact the commission office with further inquiries at wspqac@doh.wa.gov.
- Present the plan for official commission approval (either a new plan or implementing an approved plan at a new site).
- If the plan involves the take-back of controlled medications, the plan must meet the DEA requirements.
- Register with DEA as an authorized collector; collection site.
Once the commission gives approval, contact the DEA for authorization to collect controlled substances. DEA registrants may modify their registration online to become authorized collectors.