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April 25, 2016

Marcia Lee Taylor  
President & CEO  
Partnership for Drug-Free Kids  
352 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10010

Dear Ms. Taylor,

We, the undersigned, recently became aware of the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids' advertisement in *The New Yorker*, which promotes disposal of leftover pharmaceuticals through mixing with kitty litter and throwing in the household trash.

This recommendation runs counter to [guidance](#) on the proper disposal of leftover pharmaceuticals offered by state and local government agencies around the country, which deem **trash disposal as a last resort**. Government agencies promote **take-back and mail-back programs** as the best strategies for reducing the health and environmental impacts of unwanted drugs. In fact, the Partnership's own [Safe Disposal Guide](#) indicates that trash disposal or sewer disposal are not recommended. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you refrain from putting out ads promoting trash disposal of household pharmaceuticals, and update your website to feature take-back more prominently.

We all share the goal of protecting public health by reducing substance abuse and drug overdose. We recognize that your goal in designing the ad was to educate the public about the dangers of improperly storing leftover medications in the home. However, when mixed with kitty litter or coffee grounds, drugs are not rendered irretrievable or fully undesirable, and they remain accessible to children, pets, and addicts. In addition, studies show that, when put in the trash, over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs can contaminate waterways and the drinking water supply, harming aquatic life and potentially human health.

Your ad also contributes to inconsistent messaging around drug disposal nationwide. We are concerned that this leads to public confusion and apathy in deciding whether or how to remove leftover drugs from the home. Many of us have been working on household pharmaceutical waste issues for over a decade, and during that time we have learned that providing the public with drug take-back programs at pharmacies, police stations, and other convenient locations will save more lives and better protect the environment than trash disposal.

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We recognize that take-back programs are not fully available in all, or even most, parts of the country. Making these take-backs more convenient for residents is a central focus of our current efforts. We are educating pharmacies about the benefits of drug take-back—both for their businesses and for their communities—and are encouraging them to collect. We are also working to pass pharmaceutical stewardship legislation that provides sustainable funding for these take-back initiatives through extended producer responsibility laws.

**Please join us in our efforts to provide the public with consistent messaging that favors drug take-back programs where they are available, and trash disposal only as a last resort.** You are welcome to share the Product Stewardship Institute's [safe drug disposal fact sheet](#) on your website, and we would be interested in discussing additional ways we can collaborate in pursuit of our common objectives.

If you have any questions, please contact PSI's chief executive officer, Scott Cassel, at [scott@productstewardship.us](mailto:scott@productstewardship.us) or (617) 236-4822. Alternatively, you can contact Vivian Fuhrman, PSI's pharmaceuticals lead, at [vivian@productstewardship.us](mailto:vivian@productstewardship.us) or (617) 236-4771.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Product Stewardship Institute, Inc.

*(Other signees)*