



# STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

161 Delaware Avenue

Delmar, NY 12054-1393

January 4, 2011

**DAL: DAL 11-02**  
**SUBJECT: Medication Disposal Guidelines**

Dear Administrator:

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to Adult Care Facilities on the disposal of medications no longer in use. This DAL supercedes our response to question #35 in the August 26, 2005 DAL-HCBC 05-07 that instructed facilities to dispose of non-controlled medications by “flushing down the toilet or sink or discarding them in the garbage disposal”. Medication that has been prescribed but is no longer in use by the resident is to be destroyed or disposed of in accordance with the Public Health Law.

As array of medicines have been found in our rivers, streams and drinking water resulting in an emerging environmental issue, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) **recommends that medications not be flushed**. Facilities are instructed to place unused, unwanted or expired drugs in the trash in a sealed bag, empty can or other container adding water, salt, ashes, coffee grounds or kitty litter to the container prior to placing it in the trash. Additional information on medication disposal can be found at the following websites:

- [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)
- [www.smarxtdisposal.net](http://www.smarxtdisposal.net)
- [www.WhiteHousedrugPolicy.gov](http://www.WhiteHousedrugPolicy.gov)
- <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm>

If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact the Division of Assisted Living at (518) 408-1133 for further clarification.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Hart  
Director  
Division of Assisted Living

cc: Regional Office Program Managers