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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**County of Santa Clara Ordinance Requires Sharps  
Manufacturers To Fund A Safe, Free And Convenient  
County-Wide Sharps Waste Collection Program**

*Sharps Industry Must Submit a Comprehensive Plan Within 6 Months*

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF.**— The County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors has passed legislation ([Ordinance No. NS-517.92](#)) requiring sharps manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies who produce and distribute medicines that require home injection to submit and implement a comprehensive plan for safe disposal of consumer-generated sharps waste. Sharps waste includes medical devices with sharp points or edges that can cut or puncture the skin, such as needles, syringes, and lancets, that are necessary for patient care outside of traditional healthcare settings.

"This is a common-sense law that simply requires the manufacturers of sharps to take responsibility for funding and publicizing a disposal program," said Supervisor Ken Yeager, who originally proposed the sharps ordinance. "This ordinance will both prevent injuries and assist in stopping the spread of infections and disease, while also helping to keep Santa Clara County clean and pristine."

This "Extended Producer Responsibility" law, requires sharps manufacturers to develop and fund a free, comprehensive program to safely collect and dispose of consumer-generated sharps products. This would include nearly 100 disposal kiosks located in pharmacies, law enforcement facilities, community centers, senior centers and other convenient locations. In addition to the disposal kiosks, there will be many hundreds more locations where residents can pick up a prepaid sharps container for free mail-back along with online mail-back services for homebound residents. Outreach and publicity in the native languages of Santa Clara County's diverse population is a further requirement of the law.

"Safely removing used sharps from our environment and waste stream necessitates a targeted customer-centered convenient collection system, and this ordinance takes us in that direction," said Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency Director Jo Zientek.

It is estimated that more than 1.7 million sharps products are generated each month in the County of Santa Clara with that number expected to grow with more home injectable products being introduced each year. While it is currently illegal for sharps products to be disposed of in garbage or recycling bins in a home, there remains limited community awareness or access to easy alternatives.

Improper and unsafe sharps disposals can transmit potentially infectious pathogens such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C to those who unintentionally come in contact with improperly disposed sharps. Increased access to proper sharps disposal opportunities will reduce the health risk for our neighbors, coworkers, friends and family in our community working in solid waste facilities, recycling centers, home health care, senior centers, custodial services and many more.

This ordinance builds upon the County's success of the existing Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance, first passed in 2015 and revised in 2017, which provides safe, free and convenient drop-off of unwanted or expired medications. With 57 medicine disposal kiosks currently operating in pharmacies and law enforcement facilities and approximately 100 expected by the end of 2018 along with numerous mail-back envelope pickup locations, residents have increasing opportunities to protect human health and the environment. The County of Santa Clara is on track to have more take-back locations for meds than any county in California. For a complete list of medicine disposal locations visit SCCMEDS.ORG or HHW.ORG and to find regular sharps disposal ordinance updates and kiosk and mail-back locations as they are added, visit HHW.ORG or call (408) 299-7300 during business hours.

### **ABOUT THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA**

The County of Santa Clara government serves a diverse, multi-cultural population of 1.9 million residents in Santa Clara County, the fifth largest county in California. With a \$6.5 billion budget, more than 70 agencies/departments and 20,000 employees, the County of Santa Clara plans for the needs of a dynamic community, offers quality services, and promotes a healthy, safe and prosperous community for all. The County provides essential services including public health and environmental protection, medical services through Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC), child and adult protection services, homelessness prevention and solutions, roads, parks, libraries, emergency response to disasters, protection of minority communities and those under threat, access to a fair criminal justice system, and scores of other services, particularly for those members of our community in the greatest need.

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