



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
PHIL BRYANT, GOVERNOR

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
TRUDY D. FISHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Release Date: 10/18/2012

Title: MDEQ MEDICAL SHARPS PROGRAM REACHES ONE MILLION MILESTONE

Author: Robbie Wilbur

Publish: Yes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 2012

Contact: Robbie Wilbur

601/961-5277

MDEQ MEDICAL SHARPS PROGRAM REACHES ONE MILLION MILESTONE

(JACKSON, Miss.) –The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality’s (MDEQ) Household Medical Sharps Collection Program has collected more than one million household medical sharps since the beginning of the program in 2010. The program was developed by MDEQ to reduce the number of household medical sharps being disposed of in household garbage and toilets.

Household medical sharps include such items as needles, syringes, lancets, and other sharp objects used to penetrate the skin for medical testing or for delivery of medication. Medical sharps disposed in household trash present a safety hazard to sanitary workers and to the general public if trash bags containing loose sharps are torn.

This voluntary partnership, with local establishments such as pharmacies, fire stations, and other venues, offers the public free, local drop-off sites. There are currently 158 drop-off collection stations in 91 communities across the state. The program has grown from 260,000 sharps collected in 2010, to 400,000 in 2011, to a projected 480,000 by the end of 2012.

Estimates are that the number of medical sharps used in the home has doubled in the past 10 years due to an increasing prevalence of diabetes and an increase in the number of home pharmaceuticals delivered by self-injection.

MDEQ encourages people to use the no-cost collection program and hopes to further increase the number of sharps collected. To participate, medical sharps should be sealed in a hard plastic container with a screw-on lid, such as a used detergent bottle, and dropped off at a participating collection site. MDEQ provides each drop-off collection station with an 18-gallon bin that is then disposed of in the same manner as sharps generated in hospitals and other medical establishments.

The program was launched after legislation was passed by the Mississippi Legislature in 2008, and it was then developed and implemented by MDEQ. For more information about safe disposal of household medical sharps, including a statewide list of drop-off collection stations, visit www.deq.state.ms.us/medsharps.

###