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**City of Duluth - Communications Office**

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**DATE: 6/6/2016**

**SUBJECT: Duluth Police and Partners Announce Sharps Pick Up & Disposal Initiative**

**BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office**

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## **Duluth Police and Partners Announce Sharps Pick Up & Disposal Initiative**

[Duluth, MN] - The Duluth Police Department along with the City of Duluth, the Rural AIDS Action Network, and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) are organizing a community-wide sharps information and pick up event on Saturday, June 11, 2016 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The City and its partners are working together to train volunteers and the community on how to safely dispose of abandoned medical sharps.

Public education is a priority and training is available through the City of Duluth, the Rural AIDS Action Network, and the Duluth Police Department. The public is invited to meet at the Public Safety Building, 2030 N. Arlington Ave, this Saturday where WLSSD will have information about free disposal and proper handling and the Rural AIDS Action Network will have sharps containers for residents to take and use. Duluth Police will provide instructions to participants who will then be assigned to help clean up specific locations. Area residents who are volunteering for the cleanup, should dress for the weather.

Using care and common sense, residents can properly dispose of sharps to keep our neighborhoods clean and safe. Simple precautions such as wearing gloves, carefully picking up the sharp from the safe plunger end; avoiding the needle at any time; disposing of the needle in a thick plastic container such as a laundry detergent jug; and washing your hands with warm soapy water immediately after disposal are vital for safety.

It is illegal to dispose of sharps in household garbage or recycling within the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (Duluth, Cloquet, Proctor, Hermantown, and surrounding communities). Here are simple steps the public can take:

- Select a rigid plastic container with a screw-on lid. Laundry detergent jugs work best for storing used sharps. Avoid thin plastics like milk jugs or pop bottles.
- Label the container "Household Medical Sharps" or obtain a free sticker from WLSSD to label the container.
- Carefully place needles, syringes, lancets, and ties in the container immediately after use. When the container is full, secure the lid with heavy-duty tape.
- Bring the container to the WLSSD Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHW) during normal hours of operation for FREE disposal.

The Rural AIDS Action Network has generously donated containers to help facilitate safe disposal of sharps. To receive your free sharps container, contact the Rural AIDS Action Network at 218-464-8591.

Anyone who discovers sharps and are not comfortable handling them can call the new **SHARPS HOTLINE** at 218-730-4001. Calls will be answered 24/7 and a volunteer will respond to the location.

Questions about this initiative can be directed to Duluth Police Lt. Jeff Kazel at (218) 730-5463.

Questions about proper handling and free household sharps disposal should be directed to WLSSD, (218) 722-3336.

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