



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Free Sharps Collection Services Offered at Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department

KALAMAZOO, MI— Kalamazoo County residents can now dispose of used hypodermic needles, syringes, and lancets, more commonly referred to as “sharps,” at the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department located at 311 E. Alcott Street. The collection site intends to provide residents a convenient and safe place for free, proper disposal of sharps in Kalamazoo County.

Residents of Kalamazoo County must bring their sharps in a tightly sealed, puncture-proof container. Approved containers consist of a medical sharps container, heavy-duty plastic laundry detergent jug with a tight-fitting lid, or metal or hard plastic coffee can with a secure lid. Sharps should not be mixed with other materials. No individual or loose sharps, milk jugs, plastic juice containers, plastic bags, or cardboard boxes will be accepted. Pills, liquids, and other medications will also not be accepted.

The sharps kiosk is located in the lobby of the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department. Residents may dispose of their sharps containers during regular business hours of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The collected sharps will be disposed by Hospital Network Healthcare Services (HNHS); a complimentary service they are providing to Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department.

“The improper disposal of medical waste in household trash is harmful to our environment and a potential public health threat to all residents,” said James Rutherford, Health Officer of Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department. “Offering residents a safe and secure option for disposing of their needles, syringes and lancets improves the health for all in Kalamazoo County. We are thankful for the partnership with HNHS in helping our residents to properly dispose of used sharps,” said Rutherford.

Research has documented that syringes remain infectious for prolonged periods. Safe disposal sites reduce

- sharing of syringes,
- circulation time of syringes,
- percentage of contaminated syringes in circulation, and
- risk of exposure/needle stick injuries.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

311 E. Alcott St. | Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Phone: 269.373.5200 | www.kalcounty.com/hcs

The use of sharps presents an opportunity for cuts, abrasions, and puncture wounds. Two of the most common causes of needle sticks are re-capping needles and improper disposal of needles. All needle sticks, and other sharps injuries, carry the risk of secondary infections in addition to exposure to the needle's content and/or contamination on the outside of the needle or other sharp instruments. Sharps usage may also present a risk of exposure to infectious agents or other hazardous materials via sprays and aerosols – particularly from non-needle-locking syringes.

Medical facilities, schools, and businesses should still utilize their existing medical disposal services to dispose of sharps used at their location. The new sharps collection service at the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department is for residents utilizing sharps for personal use outside of a medical facility, school, or business.

Residents should never put sharps into their recycling or regular household trash. Non-residents should reach out to their local health department within their community for safe disposal options.

For more information, call the Health & Community Services Department at 269-373-5200 or visit www.kalcounty.com/hcs.

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