



**KENT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Program Gives Residents Disposal Option for Used Needles

Grand Rapids, MI – Kent County residents now have an option for safe disposal of used needles. The Kent County Department of Public Works (KCDPW) and the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) are teaming up to ensure safe, confidential and environmentally sound disposal of certain medical materials through the **SafeSharps** Program.

“Sharps” is the term for medical devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. These items frequently end up in the waste stream and can injure waste handlers and other unsuspecting members of the public. Used sharps can transmit serious diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis. Michigan has no law preventing residents from placing sharps in their household waste.

Beginning January 4, Kent County residents may request a free container from any KCHD facility. After completing a brief registration form, KCHD will issue a sterile approved container that users may take home. Once full, the container can be returned to any KCHD facility where it will be exchanged for a new one. KCHD will not accept sharps in any container that was not issued through this program.

“This program allows us to further serve the people of Kent County with a new and necessary service,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD. “It is another example of our efforts to foster interdepartmental cooperation that benefits all Kent County taxpayers.”

KCHD facilities will issue and accept containers during normal business hours (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.) at the following locations:

- Kent County Health Department - 700 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids
- Sheldon Clinic - 121 Franklin SE, Grand Rapids
- South Clinic – 4700 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Kentwood
- North County Clinic – 4388 14 Mile Road NE, Rockford

“We see sharps at our disposal sites daily. Our hope is that this program will greatly reduce the risk to our staff from exposure to used needles,” said Nic VanderVinne, Kent County’s Resource Recovery & Recycling Manager.

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