Washington State Health Care Authority

WSPHA + WSEHA Joint Conference

STARTS WITH one

Safe Medication Storage & Disposal

as Public and Environmental Health

Esther Escobedo

Account Manager,
DH

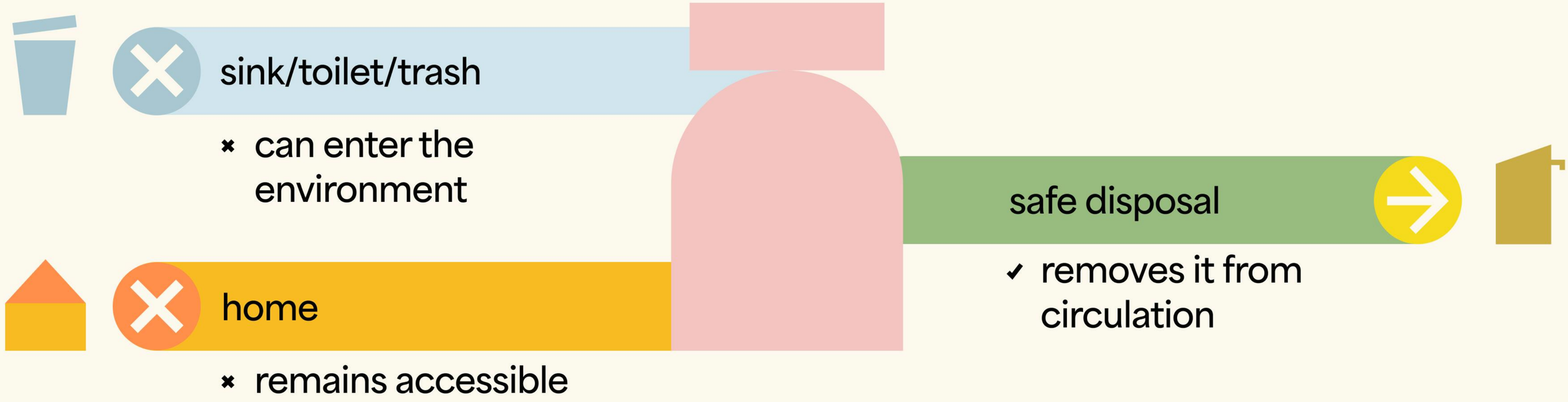
Stacie Jones

Associate VP,
DH

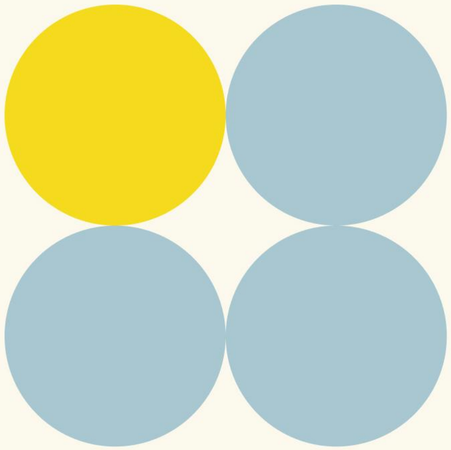
Anne Paulsen

State Opioid Response (SOR)
Communications Consultant,
WA HCA

Where it goes matters.

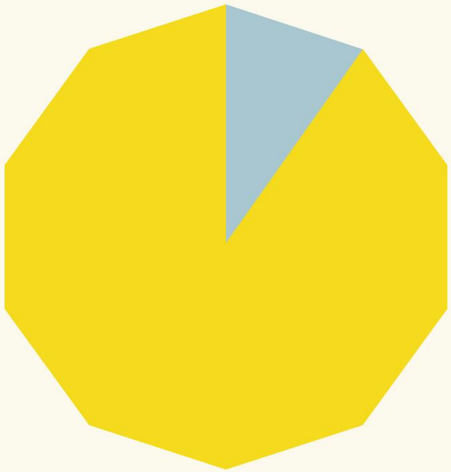






1 in 4

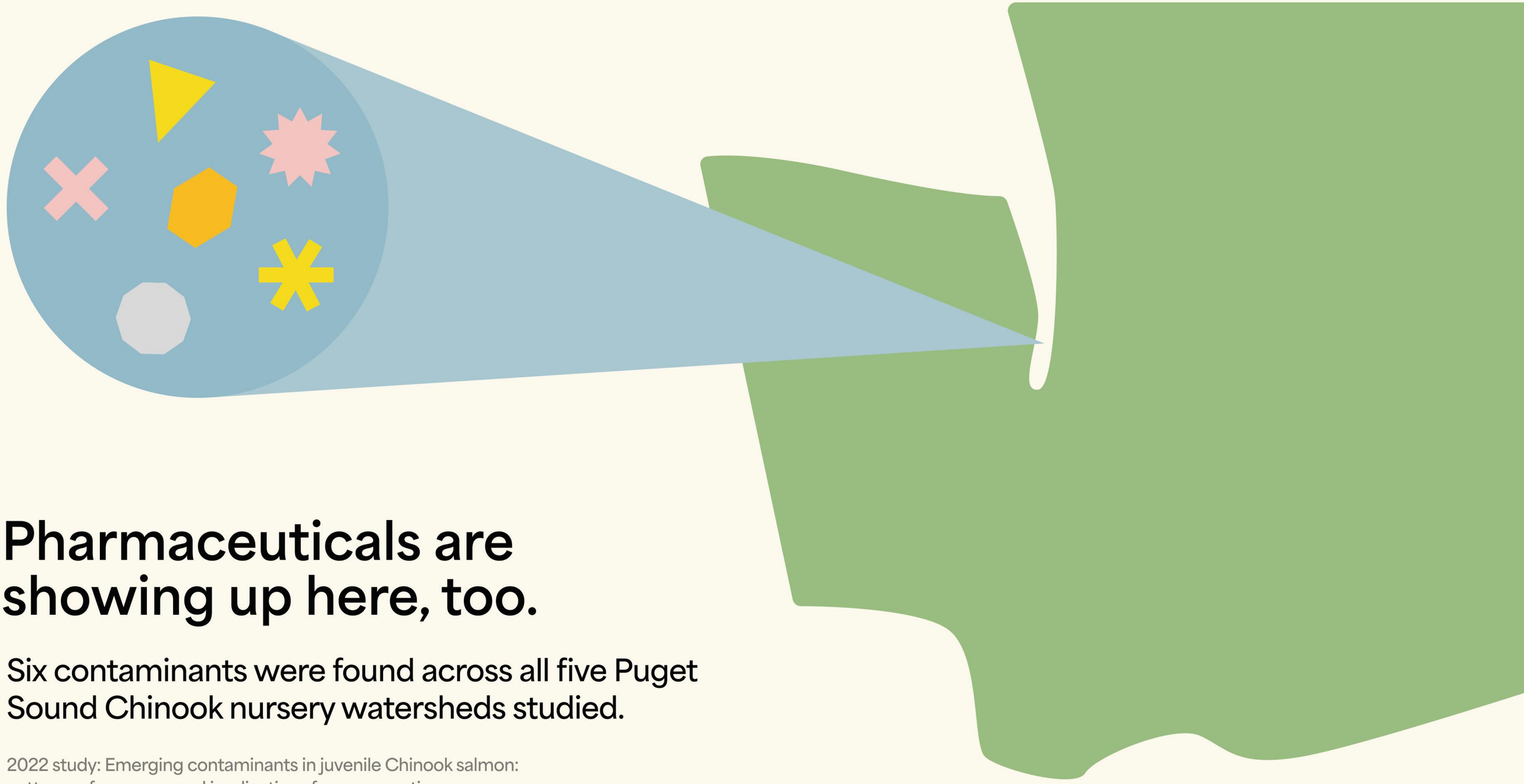
river sampling sites worldwide had pharmaceutical concentrations above levels of ecological concern[1]



91%

of U.S. headwater streams studied contained mixtures of pharmaceuticals[2]

[1] 2022 study: Pharmaceutical pollution of the world's rivers
[2] 2020 study: Multi-region assessment of pharmaceutical exposures and predicted effects in USA wadeable urban-gradient streams



Pharmaceuticals are showing up here, too.

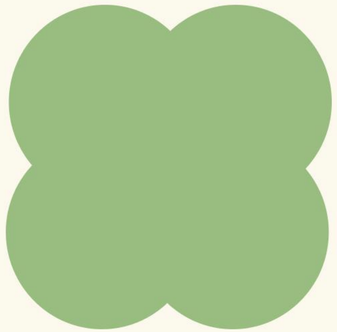
Six contaminants were found across all five Puget Sound Chinook nursery watersheds studied.

2022 study: Emerging contaminants in juvenile Chinook salmon: patterns of exposure and implications for conservation

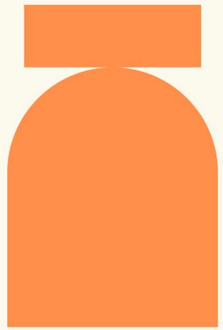
Washington State Health Care Authority

Starts with One

Washington's statewide opioid misuse prevention campaign



Pain management



Prescription opioid education



Safe storage + disposal

4 in 10

people who misuse pain relievers obtain them from a friend or family member.

While medication is needed: Store it securely

When it’s no longer needed: Dispose of it safely

Clear

Easy

Immediate

Accessible

Drop



Medication take-back kiosks

MedTakeBackWashington.org

Mail



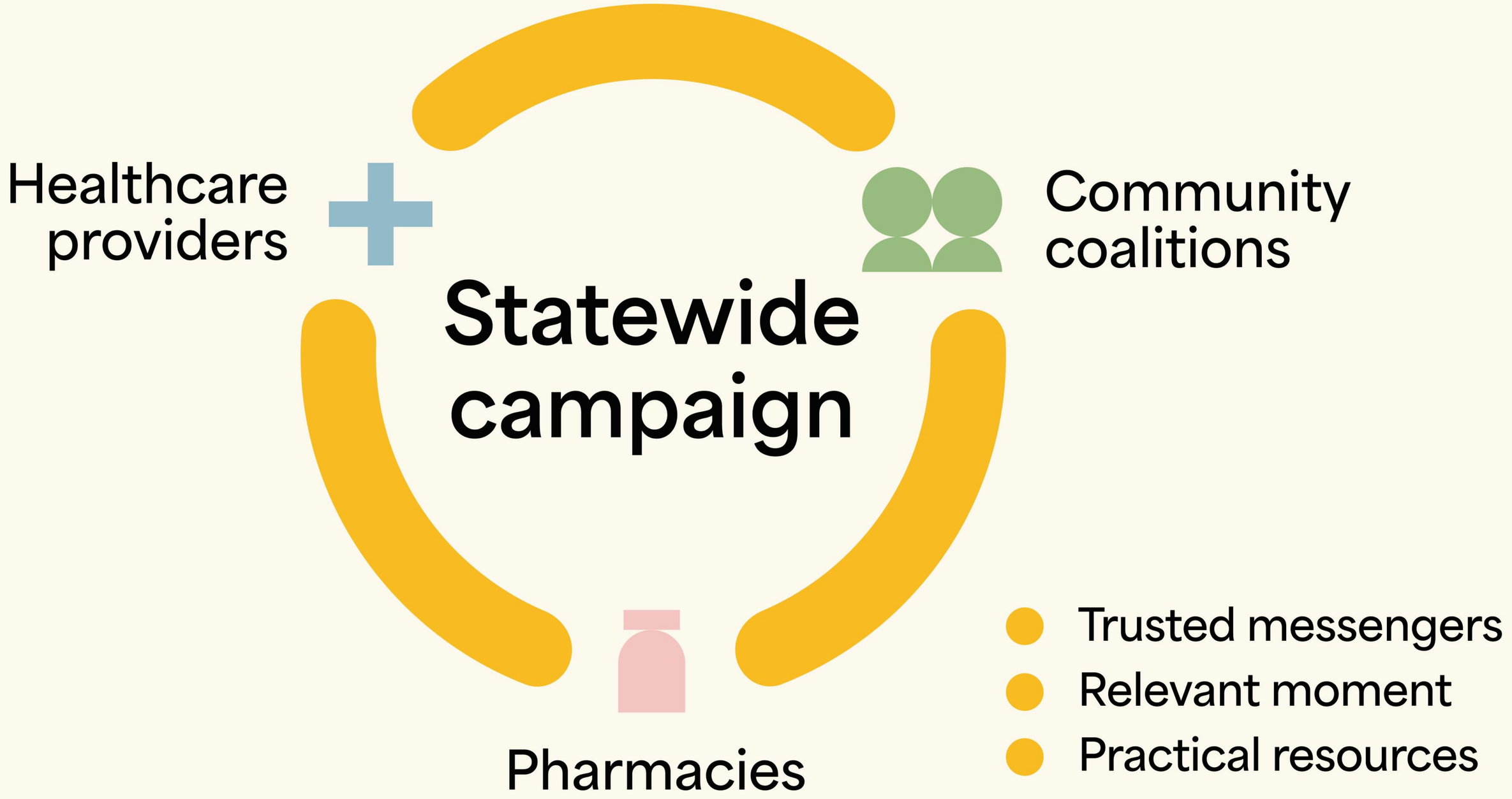
Free mail-back envelopes

MedTakeBackWashington.org

Lock



Medication locking devices


Healthcare providers
Community coalitions
Statewide campaign
Pharmacies
Trusted messengers
Relevant moment
Practical resources

Since 2020,

112 pharmacies

12,535
people reached

7,322
locking devices

5,235
pledges





Take Back Day: October 24, 2026

Since 2016, over 353,360 lbs of medications have been safely disposed of.

Promote Take Back Day

Know your local disposal options

MedTakeBackWashington.org

Use the campaign resources

GetTheFactsRx.com

One simple step can protect both people and the environment.

prevention@wearedh.com

