

# Project to track medical waste

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

Michigan may join a 10-state pilot program run by the national Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to track medical waste.

The topic became a major concern last summer when medical waste, including used hypodermic needles, washed ashore on beaches in New Jersey and in the state along Lake Michigan near Ludington.

It became a summer of record heat, no rain and editorial cartoons showing kids playing with needles instead of sea shells at the seashore.

According to Tom Scott, press spokesman for Gov. James Blanchard, one of the governor's aides, J.D. Snyder, was in Maryland this week discussing the proposed pilot program with EPA officials.

Barbara Lambert of the EPA, who was in Michigan recently for a conference of municipal officials, identified the 10 likely states for the project as New Jersey and the Great Lakes states of New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota and Indiana.

The program is a result of recent federal legislation requiring the EPA to come up with regulations curbing hospital waste.

ACCORDING TO SCOTT, "At this point, we are working with the EPA to help develop and shape these rules. We're trying to develop rules we think would be beneficial to the Great Lakes. And whether we get involved or not depends on those rules. Right now, if we find medical waste we can impose penalties, but we'd be better off if we had a tracking system."

Snyder is chairman of a Great Lakes task force on medical waste. Scott said the EPA has until Feb. 1 to work out details of its proposed program. Most states, including Michigan, will then have the option

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of joining the program or not. Lambert said New York and New Jersey would be required by federal officials to participate.

Officials think the medical waste that washed up on Michigan shores last summer came from a hospital in Wisconsin. How it got on Michigan beaches, forcing their closing, no one knows.

The EPA says if it studies waste from the time it is generated till it is disposed — including who has the contract to haul it away and where it is supposed to go — they can better find and punish violators, and come up with better regulations to insure its proper disposal.

UNDER CURRENT federal law, hospitals are responsible only for hazardous waste they generate. There are no state or federal rules

for other wastes. Hospital waste is divided into four classes — infectious or "red bag" waste, hazardous waste, waste that may be hazardous and routine trash.

Infectious waste includes used needles, human tissue and body parts. Hazardous waste includes laboratory agents like cyanide and acids. State Rep. Michael Bennane, D-Detroit, has introduced legislation that would regulate the disposal of infectious medical waste. He chairs the house Committee on Public Health.

Hospital officials have downplayed the chances of getting involved from hospital waste, but in light of the furor over AIDS, public response to used needles washing ashore on beaches was vocal. And it was heard in Washington.



# OU hosts career program

High School students who are interested in careers in engineering or computer science are invited with their parents to a free open house Sunday, Nov. 20, at Oakland University.

The program is sponsored by the School of Engineering and Computer Science.

It will run from 12:30 to 4 p.m. in 201 Dodge Hall of Engineering. The

formal program will open at 1 p.m. with remarks from Dean Howard Will.

School officials say engineering and computer science graduates remain marketable, particularly in this area with its emphasis on high technology.

The open house will allow students and parents to learn of the opportunities in the field, the curricula in the OU programs, hear an engineer-

ing alumna's view of OU and participate in laboratory demonstrations.

Students can also talk to OU officials about financial aid and scholarship opportunities. OU offers bachelor of science, master's and doctoral programs in engineering and a bachelor of science with a major in computer science.

Interested students or parents are asked to call 370-3360 or 370-2217 in advance of the program.

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## Concerts will honor Karlstrom

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Diamond Jubilee celebration continues as former music director Sixten Ehrling returns to the Ford Auditorium podium for the concert at 8 p.m. this evening and Friday and 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

He will conduct a complete performance of Beethoven's "Daphnis et Chloé" featuring the Detroit Symphony Chorus. Glazunov's Symphony No. 5 is also on the program.

Ehrling's tenure with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra lasted for ten years, 1969-1973.

He conducted the world premieres of 24 compositions (ten of which were commissioned by the DSO) and the Detroit premieres of nearly 200 more works. He expanded the Orchestra's repertoire by introducing many 20th century pieces.

He was one of the innovators and the chief artistic planner of the Meadow Brook Music Festival, where he served as music director from its founding in 1964 and he took the Orchestra on its first West Coast tour in 1967 to Carnegie Hall for annual appearances and led the first

appearance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

This week's performances are dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Gunner (Signe) Karlstrom who died last month. She was president of the Women's Association for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 1947-1951 and championed the Orchestra's revival after it was disbanded between 1949 and 1951. She continued to be a devoted patron and worker for the DSO throughout her life.

For tickets, call 567-1400.

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