

Health Notification

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is April 28, 2018

April 16, 2018

In Philadelphia, prescription opioid sales more than doubled between 2000 and 2012, and have only begun to decline in more recent years. It is estimated that up to 200,000 people in Philadelphia receive at least one prescription for an opioid pain medication every year. As a result of high prescribing over such a long time period, there are many households in our City with expired, unused, and unwanted prescription pain killers in their medicine cabinets.

According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet. Indeed, studies indicate that four out of five heroin users had their first exposure to an opioid from a prescription pain medication, such as Vicodin, Percocet, or OxyContin. In the midst of the opioid epidemic, which claimed the lives of over 1,200 Philadelphians in 2017, we must encourage patients and their families to eliminate unnecessary opioids from their homes.

Prescription opioids can also have an impact on the environment and rivers that supply our drinking water. While some medicine may pass through the body and end up in wastewater, flushing concentrated, unused drugs down the toilet or sink is worse and should always be avoided. Drug take-back programs provide a safe, environmentally friendly way of making sure that unneeded or expired drugs don't end up in the wrong hands.

Please help the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) share the word about the next **National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, on April 28, 2018 from 10 am to 2 pm. This is an important opportunity for Philadelphians to safely dispose of all unwanted medications.** Please encourage your patients to participate, as appropriate.

Visit DEA's website, takebackday.dea.gov, for more information about collection sites, year-round drug disposal, and education materials relating to Drug Take Back Day. You may wish to announce this event by making the attached flyer available to your patients.