

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Promotes National Prescription Drug Take-

Back Day

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is scheduled for April 28, 2012. Collectively, the past three Prescription Drug Take-Back Days organized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have received 995,185 pounds of expired or unwanted prescription drugs across the 50 states and U.S. territories. These events have highlighted the need for proper collection and disposal of un-wanted prescription drugs with the purpose of preventing the misuse and abuse of potentially dangerous substances.¹

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that according to the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the number of Americans that abuse prescription drugs exceed those using cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin, and inhalants combined. Easy access by family members and teens to unused prescription drugs found in medicine cabinets contributes to this problem. These unused medicines open the door to future abuse and addiction.¹

The Prescription Drug Take-Back Days are a part of the White House's strategy entitled, *Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis*, that outlines four action plans to combat this crisis. These plans include the removal of unwanted or expired prescription medicines from homes, educating healthcare providers and the public on prescription drug abuse, addressing "doctor shopping," and establishing in all states a prescription drug monitoring

program. In 2010, Congress amended the Controlled Substances Act to allow the DEA to develop a safe and effective process for the collection and disposal of unwanted and unused prescription drugs. While the DEA continues to work on establishing a permanent prescription drug disposal process, it alternatively offers periodic Drug Take-Back Days.¹

Some states are exploring the use of medication disposal boxes placed in high traffic areas such as pharmacies, health centers and clinics for the purpose of safely providing uninterrupted disposal services. These target all medications with the dual purpose of decreasing access to dangerous drugs while at the same time beginning to lessen substances like estrogen from showing up in streams and rivers.

It is important to note that other recommendations can be followed to dispose of unwanted prescription drugs during periods of time between scheduled Take-Back events. The FDA provides information on proper disposal of prescription drugs in both the household trash and toilet based on the specific drug being discarded. Although the use of these methods of disposal is less preferred due to their potential adverse environmental impact, the need to immediately remove prescription drugs from the home to protect young children, pets, and teens may necessitate their use. Recommendations as to the appropriate process used for disposal in the trash or toilet and specific list of especially harmful drugs recommended for disposal in the toilet via flushing can be found at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website by following the links labeled Drugs > Resources for You > Information for Consumers (Drugs).²

1. http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/takeback_102911.html

2. <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm>

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Phyllis Perron, LPA Executive Director at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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