

Help Prevent Prescription Painkiller Abuse in Wisconsin

By Attorney General Brad Schimel and Chief Christopher Domagalski

Have you heard about the nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic? Did you know it affects thousands of people every day and kills hundreds every year in our state?

It's time we take this problem head on and do something to help prevent this epidemic from getting worse. On April 29, five communities throughout Sheboygan County will be hosting Drug Take Back Day - a national initiative to get all those unused prescription and over-the-counter drugs out of your medicine cabinet and safely destroyed.

Why is it important that we participate in this nationwide event? Seventy percent of people who are addicted to prescription painkillers first used them after improperly obtaining them from a family member or friend. And here's another sobering "dose of reality:" four out of five people addicted to heroin began their addiction to opiates by abusing prescription painkillers. By getting unused medications out of our homes and safely disposing of them, we decrease the likelihood of diversion and abuse.

Despite the grim statistics, there is a bright spot. Over the last two years, Wisconsinites have successfully disposed of more than 200,000 pounds of unused medications. That's nearly 12 semi-trucks full of unused drugs that aren't ending up in the wrong hands!

On Saturday, April 29, between 10 AM and 1 PM, bring your unneeded medications to any of the following five locations to do your part to prevent prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin.

- Howards Grove – Village Hall, 913 South Wisconsin Dr., Howards Grove
- Oostburg – Municipal Building, 1140 Minnesota Ave., Oostburg
- Plymouth – Generations, 1500 Douglas Dr., Plymouth
- Random Lake – Fire Department, 718 Spring St., Random Lake
- Sheboygan – St. Nicholas Hospital, 3100 Superior Ave., Sheboygan

Do Bring: Prescription (controlled and non-controlled) and over-the-counter medications, ointments, patches, inhalers, non-aerosol sprays, creams, vials and pet medications.

Do Not Bring: Illegal drugs, needles/sharps, acids, aerosol cans, bio-hazardous materials (anything containing a bodily fluid or blood), personal care products (shampoo, soaps, lotions, sunscreens), household hazardous waste (paint, pesticides, oil, gas), mercury thermometers.

- Participants may dispose of solid, non-liquid medication(s) by removing the medication from its container and disposing of it directly into a disposal box or into a clear sealable plastic bag. Plastic pill containers should not be collected. Blister packages without the medications being removed are acceptable.
- Liquids will be accepted during this initiative. However, the liquids, creams and sprays must be in their original packaging. Liquids without the original packaging will not be accepted.
- Illicit substances such as marijuana or methamphetamine are not a part of this initiative and should not be placed in collection containers.

If every Wisconsinite followed these simple steps, we could drastically reduce the number of drug overdose deaths in our state: use prescriptions only as prescribed to you, store prescriptions securely, properly dispose of unused prescriptions, and help spread the important message about safe prescription use. Please go to www.DoseOfRealityWI.gov to learn more preventing prescription pain killer abuse in Wisconsin.