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## **Eighth Annual Medication Disposal Event to be Held Sept. 12 at Michigan's Capitol**

*Pharmacists working to curb opioid abuse and help end the diversion of prescription pharmaceuticals*

Lansing, Mich.—Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) will host the eighth annual Medication Disposal Event at the Capitol on the south Capitol Lawn on Tuesday, Sept. 12, where the general public is encouraged to drop off their unused, unwanted or expired medications from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the medication disposal tent. Curbside drop-off will also be available on S. Capitol Ave. between Michigan Ave. and Allegan St.

Held in conjunction with the Association's annual Pharmacy Day at the Capitol, this event allows participants to safely and responsibly dispose of medications, including controlled substances and narcotics. Those attending the event will have the opportunity to see what the State is doing to curb substance abuse and the valuable role pharmacists and other healthcare providers play in impacting the opioid epidemic. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), opioids (both prescription and heroin) killed more than 33,000 people throughout the United States in 2015, more than any year on record, with nearly half of all opioid overdose deaths involving a prescription medication.<sup>1</sup> In Michigan alone, 1,980 people died in 2015 from opioid overdoses.<sup>1</sup> Of those who ultimately abuse prescription opioids, 26 percent get them from a friend or relative.<sup>2</sup> This event provides a safe forum for disposing of unwanted medications, including opioids and other controlled substances, in an effort to get them out of the medicine cabinet and off the streets.

"With the opioid crisis reaching an all-time high, MPA encourages the public to properly dispose of unwanted and expired medications," said Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist and MPA chief executive officer. "Pharmacists are the medication experts which is why we are on the front lines in combating this epidemic. I strongly believe that with community-wide education and preventative methods we will be able to positively impact this very serious problem." Wagenknecht currently sits on the Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission, an appointment made by Gov. Rick Snyder in June of 2016.

A press conference, held at 11 a.m., will focus on the work of Michigan's Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission, the actions that all healthcare providers can take to combat the rising costs of the opioid epidemic and how to educate the public and patients about properly disposing of medications to keep them off the streets and out of our environment. Confirmed speakers are listed below.

- Brian Calley, lieutenant Governor, state of Michigan
- Eden V. Wells, M.D., M.P.H., chief medical executive, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Jim Lile, Pharm.D., president, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist and chief executive officer, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Jack Schinderle, chief, Office of Environmental Assistance, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

In 2016, MPA, in cooperation with the city of Wyoming, collected nearly 600 pounds of unused, unwanted or expired medications, worth more than \$1 million. Of those 600 pounds of returned medications, 20 pounds were controlled substances. Since MPA began the medication disposal event seven years ago, a total of 1.9 tons of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of by the city of Wyoming, a total value of more than \$5 million. For more information, including what items are accepted and not accepted, please visit [www.MichiganPharmacists.org/MedicationDisposal](http://www.MichiganPharmacists.org/MedicationDisposal).

Pharmacy Day at the Capitol is an event designed to educate government officials and the public on the vital role pharmacists play in healthcare. Lawmakers will receive health screenings as well as influenza immunizations administered by pharmacists.

Michigan Pharmacists Association, representing the nearly 9,000 pharmacists and 15,000 pharmacy technicians in Michigan, strives to serve members by providing support, advocacy and resources that ultimately improve patient care, safety, health and the practice of pharmacy. For more information, visit [www.MichiganPharmacists.org](http://www.MichiganPharmacists.org).

### **References:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opioid Overdose: Understanding the Epidemic. *CDC website*. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>. Accessed July 2017. Updated December 16, 2016.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opioid Overdose: Drug Overdose Death Data. *CDC website*. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>. Accessed July 2017. Updated December 16, 2016.