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Contact: Kristina Bird, MPA director of communications
(517) 377-0232

Ninth Annual Medication Disposal Event set for Oct. 2 at Michigan's Capitol

Pharmacy professionals working to combat the rising rates of opioid and properly dispose of unused medications

Lansing, Mich.—Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) will host the ninth annual Medication Disposal Event at the Capitol on the south Capitol Lawn on Tuesday, Oct. 2, 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 learn more about what the state and MPA are doing to curb the opioid epidemic as well as witness the valuable role of pharmacy professionals in curbing the impact of the epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2016 alone, 2,347 individuals died of a drug overdose, of which 1,762 were attributed to opioids.^{1,2} Throughout the U.S. in 2017, enough opioid prescriptions were dispensed for nearly half the population to have one.³ 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.

“Properly disposing of unused, unwanted or expired medications accomplishes two very important tasks: it ensures those medications do not find their way into our environments and ensures those same medications do not find their way into our communities,” said Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist and MPA chief executive officer. “Pharmacists are on the front-lines every day with patients working to keep them safe throughout their medication treatments; medication disposal events continue to demonstrate the many ways pharmacists can directly impact the epidemic and keep communities safe,” Wagenknecht continued. Wagenknecht was a member of the Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission, an appointment made by Gov. Rick Snyder in June of 2016, which provided recommendations to the Governor on how to best address these growing issues.

A press conference will be held at 11 a.m. and will focus on the state's efforts to address the opioid epidemic, the role of pharmacists in these efforts and the importance of safe medication disposal. Confirmed speakers include:

- Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist and chief executive officer, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- David Neff, D.O., chief medical director and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Medical Services Administration, Office of Medical Affairs
- Sandra Taylor, Pharm.D., president, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Aaron Keatley, chief deputy director, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

In 2017, MPA, in cooperation with the city of Wyoming, collected nearly 1,600 pounds of unused, unwanted or expired medications. Of those 1,600 pounds of returned medications, over 20 pounds were controlled substances. Since MPA began the medication disposal event eight years ago, a total of 2.7 tons of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of by the city of Wyoming, a total value of more than \$8.75 million. For more information, including what items are accepted and not accepted, please visit 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.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drug Overdose Death Data. CDC website. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>. Updated Dec. 19, 2017. Accessed Sept. 4, 2018.
2. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths. DrugAbuse.gov website. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/michigan-opioid-summary>. Updated February 2018. Accessed Sept. 4, 2018.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. U.S. Opioid Prescribing Rate Map. CDC website. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/maps/rxrate-maps.html>. Updated July, 31, 2017. Accessed Sept. 4, 2018.