



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Oct. 4, 2018

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

**Michigan Pharmacists Association's 2018 Disposal Event Brings in  
Nearly Four Hundred Pounds of Medication**

*Pharmacists and student pharmacists helped members of the community properly dispose of their unused, unwanted and expired medications*

Lansing, Mich. - At the ninth annual Medication Disposal Event, held Oct. 2, 2018, at the Michigan State Capitol, 351 pounds of medications were dropped off by Lansing area residents for safe disposal. Of those 351 pounds, 62 pounds were controlled substances. Over the last nine years since Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) began holding the disposal event, nearly four and a half tons of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of, with a total value of more than \$8.8 million. Providing this safe means for disposing of medications has removed unnecessary and harmful drugs from households where they have the potential to be diverted or misused.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), opioids (both prescription and heroin) killed more than 42,000 people throughout the United States in 2016, more than any year on record, with nearly half of all opioid overdose deaths involving a prescription medication. In Michigan alone, 2,347 people died in 2016 from opioid overdoses, which is nearly 20 percent higher than 2015.<sup>1</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. Pharmacists can provide education and counseling to patients prescribed opioids, and when working collaboratively with other providers, pharmacists can positively affect the rising rates of drug abuse and diversion.

Larry Wagenknecht, MPA chief executive officer, along with two other MPA members, served on the Governor's Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission. This collaboration created proposed changes to ideally curb the increase in opioid abuse. The Commission sought solutions to the opioid problem that challenges every community in the state in an effort to address the alarming rates of opioid abuse and misuse.

The Medication Disposal Event is held in conjunction with the City of Wyoming and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

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: Drug Overdose Death Data. CDC website. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>. Accessed October 2018. Updated December 19, 2017.

###