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Seventh Annual Medication Disposal Event to be Held Sept. 20 at the Lansing Capitol

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

Lansing, Mich.—Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) will host the seventh annual Medication Disposal Event @ the Capitol on the south Capitol Lawn on Tuesday, Sept. 20, where the general public is encouraged to drop off their unused, unwanted or expired medications from 10:30 a.m.-1 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 about curbing substance abuse, which is a serious issue in the state, and the importance of involving pharmacists in the solution. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both prescription opioids as well as heroin were the cause of more than 28,000 deaths in 2014 alone, the most deaths in any year on record.¹ Of those deaths, half were a result of prescription opioid medications.¹ Additionally, between the years of 2000 and 2014, half a million people died as result of drug overdoses and at least 78 American die daily because of opioid drug abuse.²

“Through proper disposal of unused, unwanted and expired medications, we can keep substances out of the wrong hands and help address these alarming statistics,” said Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist and MPA chief executive officer. “With our unique knowledge, skills and abilities, pharmacists can be actively involved in reducing the negative effects of substance abuse. Through prevention efforts, education and assistance as well as collaboration with other health care providers and stakeholders, pharmacists are committed to playing a key role in the solution to Michigan's substance abuse epidemic.” Wagenknecht was recently appointed to the new Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Commission a result of Executive Order signed by Gov. Rick Snyder in June of this year.

A press conference, held at 11 a.m., will highlight the expanding and innovative roles of pharmacists in the opioid epidemic, the current status of the epidemic in the state, medication disposal information for the public and efforts to ensure patients receive the best care possible while still preventing tragic and avoidable deaths. Confirmed speakers are listed below.

- Rick Snyder, Governor, State of Michigan
- Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist, and chief executive officer, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Amy Smendik, pharmacist, and president, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Brian Peters, chief executive officer, Michigan Health & Hospital Association
- Dr. Roy Soto, anesthesiologist, Beaumont Hospital and Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Keystone
- Jack Schinderle, chief, Office of Environmental Assistance, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

In 2015, MPA collected nearly 600 pounds of unused, unwanted or expired medications, worth more than \$1 million. Since MPA began the medication disposal event six years ago, a total of 1.6 tons of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of, with a total value of more than \$4 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 health care. 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. Injury Prevention & Control: Opioid Overdose. CDC website. <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html>. Accessed Sept. 2016. Published Sept. 8, 2016.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding the Epidemic. CDC website. <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>. Accessed September 2016. Published June 21, 2016.