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## **Sixth Annual Medication Disposal Event to be Held Sept. 22 at the Lansing Capitol**

*Pharmacists committed to working toward a solution to the substance abuse epidemic in Michigan*

Lansing, Mich.—Michigan Pharmacists Association (MPA) will host the sixth annual Medication Disposal Event @ the Capitol on the south Capitol Lawn on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 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 at the intersection of Capitol Ave. and Michigan Ave. to those who cannot attend the event.

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. The number of hospitalizations involving opioids increased 120 percent between 2000 and 2011 in Michigan, from 9,157 to 20,191, respectively.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the total number of unintentional poisoning deaths rose from 235 to 973. Poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics increased by 8.3 fold, more rapidly than those from any other drug.<sup>2</sup>

“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 sits on the new Michigan Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Task Force organized by Gov. Rick Snyder in 2015.

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

- Larry Wagenknecht, pharmacist, and chief executive officer, Michigan Pharmacists Association
- Brian Calley, lieutenant governor, State of Michigan
- Jennifer Hagerman, president, Michigan Pharmacists Association, and associate vice president, education and quality, Diplomat
- Chris Stolicker, captain, Michigan State Police
- Jim Sygo, chief deputy director, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

In 2014, MPA collected 689 pounds of unused, unwanted or expired medications, worth more than \$1.3 million, an increase in 17 percent over what was collected the previous year. Since MPA began the medication disposal event five years ago, a total of 1.3 tons of pharmaceuticals have been collected and properly disposed of, with a total value of more than \$3.8 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 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](http://www.MichiganPharmacists.org).

### References:

1. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Opioid-related Hospitalizations in Michigan, [www.Michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Opioid-Related\\_Hospit\\_2000-2011\\_05-31-13\\_427136\\_7\\_431273\\_7.pdf](http://www.Michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Opioid-Related_Hospit_2000-2011_05-31-13_427136_7_431273_7.pdf), Sept. 15, 2015.
2. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Unintentional Drug Poisoning Deaths in Michigan, [www.Michigan.gov/documents/mdch/1\\_3-13-13\\_MortalityData9910\\_431271\\_7.pdf](http://www.Michigan.gov/documents/mdch/1_3-13-13_MortalityData9910_431271_7.pdf), Sept. 15, 2015.