



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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April 19, 2012

Dear Healthcare Professional:

Virginia will participate, Saturday, April 28, 2012 in the fourth National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. Sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration, this collaborative effort between state and local law enforcement agencies provides residents with an opportunity to dispose of potentially dangerous controlled substances from their medicine cabinets in an environmentally safe manner. Collection activities will take place from **10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m.** at sites designated by law enforcement throughout Virginia. To find a collection site nearby or for more information, click on the following link: http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html. Please note that this service is free and anonymous; no questions asked. The last National Prescription Drug Take-Back event took in more than 377,086 pounds (188.5 tons) of unwanted or expired medications nationwide for the purpose of safe and proper disposal.

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States. According to the most recent Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) survey, prescription medications are the second-most abused category of drugs, following marijuana. The 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) found that medicine cabinets are where youth between the ages of 12 and 18 most often obtain prescription drugs for non-medical use. According to survey findings, individuals who abuse prescription drugs, especially teens, believe these substances are safer than illicit drugs because they are prescribed by a healthcare professional. There is anecdotal evidence that stolen prescription medications most often come from home medicine cabinets of family, relatives or friends. Therefore, it is important for prescription drugs to be disposed of properly to help reduce the risk of prescription drug diversion and abuse. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2008, more than 36,000 people died from drug overdoses, and most of these deaths were caused by prescription drugs.

Health care practitioners can directly impact prescription drug abuse by educating patients regarding the proper disposal of medications. Please consider posting or providing to your patients the attached information regarding this opportunity to properly dispose of unwanted drugs.

For more information please contact Ralph Orr, Program Manager of the Virginia Prescription Monitoring Program at 804-367-4566 or by email at pmp@dhp.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

Dianne L. Reynolds-Cane, M.D.