April 16, 2019

Dear Healthcare Colleague:

**Virginia will participate Saturday, April 27, in the seventeenth National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day.** Sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 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.

*Healthcare practitioners are encouraged to advise patients about this service and to remind them it is free and anonymous with no questions asked.* Collection activities will take place from 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. at sites coordinated with law enforcement agencies throughout Virginia. Here is the [DEA website](https://www.dea.gov) for additional information as well as where you can enter your zip code to find a local collection site.

In 2018 Virginia hosted two Drug Take Back Days. According to the Virginia State Police, on April 28, 141 Virginia law enforcement agencies, including local police and sheriffs’ offices, participated in and hosted 179 collection sites statewide where 949,046 pounds or roughly 474 tons of prescription drugs were turned in. Six months later, on October 27, roughly 457 tons or 914,236 pounds of prescription drugs were dropped off to 138 Virginia law enforcement agencies across 191 collection sites in the Commonwealth.

Prescription drug abuse plays a major role in the epidemic of opioid overdoses in the U.S. Prescription drugs are susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse and are easily obtained from home medicine cabinets for improper use. Flushing medications down the toilet presents public safety and public health concerns as the drugs may enter the water supply.

Healthcare practitioners have a direct impact on prescription drug abuse by educating patients regarding the proper disposal of medications. Please consider sharing this opportunity to dispose of unwanted drugs properly. Your support of Drug Take-Back Day sets an important example.

For more information please contact Ralph Orr, Director of the Virginia Prescription Monitoring Program at 804-367-4514 or by email at pmp@dhp.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

David E. Brown, D.C.
Director
Department of Health Profession