National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Is This Saturday

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts encourages everyone to safely dispose of medications

BOSTON, Oct. 26, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Almost six and a half million Americans abuse controlled prescription drugs each year, according to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Many of those medications, including narcotics that have been linked to the opioid epidemic, were obtained from family and friends. To reduce the risk of misuse and overdose deaths, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) will hold its annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day this Saturday, October 28. Police departments around Massachusetts and the country will collect unwanted, unused and expired medications and dispose of them safely. During the last event in April, law enforcement agencies collected almost 14 tons of medications in Massachusetts alone.



Nearly 50 percent of patients who were recently prescribed an opioid do not know how to safely dispose of unused pills, according to a recent survey by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)[1].

"Lots of people keep old or unused prescription drugs in their medicine cabinets because they don't know what to do with them," said Tom Kowalski, director of clinical pharmacy at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "Keeping extra prescription medications – especially narcotic pain medications or other controlled substances – on hand can lead to accidental use, misuse or even overdose. With 91 Americans dying every day from an opioid overdose[2], it's important to remind everyone how important it is to quickly and safely remove unwanted or unused medications to reduce the chances of abuse."

If you have medications you'd like to dispose of, you can find a collection site near you at https://takebackday.dea.gov/#collection-locator. Many law enforcement agencies, pharmacies and health care organizations also collect prescription drugs for disposal throughout the year – learn more at https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not–for–profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.9 million members first, we're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

[1] https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2527388

[2] https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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