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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel and Hometown Pharmacy Partner to Educate Public on
Opioid Drug Deactivation Product**

DEFOREST, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel and Hometown Pharmacy rolled out a new option for consumers to help prevent the diversion of painkillers and other highly addictive medications with an environmentally sound drug deactivation pouch that will be available at Hometown Pharmacies across Wisconsin.

“We know that more than two thirds of people who have abused prescription painkillers first got them illegally from a friend or family member. To prevent this, I’ve prioritized destroying dangerous drugs that could otherwise be diverted for abuse,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “Since 2015 with the help of Wisconsin residents DOJ has collected and destroyed more than 400,000 pounds of unused and unwanted medications. This new option from Hometown Pharmacy will expand our efforts even further, especially in rural areas of Wisconsin where consumers have to drive further for drug disposal boxes. These deactivation pouches are an excellent option for consumers in rural and urban areas.”

The new program utilizes the Deterra® Drug Deactivation System which allows an individual to destroy medications by placing them in the pouch, adding water, waiting 30 seconds, and sealing the pouch before safely disposing of the pouch in the garbage. Deterra® has been supported by the DEA Educational Foundation and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. When put into use the technology behind the pouch renders the drugs inert and non-retrievable and is environmentally sound when disposed. An individual pouch can be utilized to destroy up to 45 pills, 6 ounces of liquid, or 6 patches. Unused or expired medicine should never be flushed or poured down the drain. Water reclamation facilities are not designed to remove all of them and trace amounts of pharmaceuticals are showing up in rivers, lakes, and our drinking water.

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"Hometown Pharmacy is actively engaged in combating the opioid epidemic while simultaneously ensuring our patients get medication for legitimate needs. Hometown has locations in small communities that may not be serviced by a local drug take back option. With this in mind, we want to provide a safe and easy option for our patients to dispose of prescription medication. We are committed to providing reasonable and safe options to protect our patients and communities. Our independent local pharmacists' relationships with their patients make Hometown an excellent front line defense to prevent medication diversion."

Hometown Pharmacy is making the drug deactivation pouches available in all 62 stores in Wisconsin. Pharmacists at the locations will make the pouches available to customers who are requesting them and will ensure the pouch is offered to customers who may have a short-term need for schedule II prescriptions like painkillers.

"Law Enforcement welcomes this new option to our communities across the state," said Verona Police Chief Bernie Coughlin. "Offering this product free of charge will make it easy on those individuals who want to dispose of drugs but coming to a drug drop box location isn't as readily available to them. I applaud the efforts of Attorney General Schimel and Hometown Pharmacy to further the fight against opioid abuse."

There are 400 permanent drug disposal drop boxes available at law enforcement agencies, pharmacies, and hospitals in Wisconsin.

To find a drug disposal location near you, search an interactive map at www.doseofrealitywi.gov/find-a-take-back-location/

After the last statewide Drug Take Back Day in April 2018, 63,541 lbs. of unused medications were collected throughout Wisconsin; more than Minnesota, Michigan, and Iowa collected, combined. Since 2015, the Wisconsin Department of Justice has collected and disposed of 401,769 lbs. of unused and unwanted medications. Wisconsin had more law enforcement agencies participate in the biannual event than any other state in the country, and Wisconsin consistently has one of the largest collections of any state in the nation. Only Texas and California have collected more unused drugs and medications.