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STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

April 23, 2021

### Spring Clean Your Prescription Drugs

April 24, 2021 is officially National Prescription Take-Back Day. It is a day set aside to encourage the collection and disposal of unused, expired and unwanted prescription drugs in a safe way.

On this day, law enforcement throughout our state will be collecting old medications and prescription drugs so they can be disposed of safely to prevent them from landing in the hands of someone who might abuse them or in a way that harms our environment. It is a good reminder for each of us to go through our medicine cabinets and households to collect old, expired, unused medications and take them to a safe disposal site in our community.

Most disposal sites will accept:

- controlled and uncontrolled substances,
- over-the-counter medications,
- ointments,
- patches,
- creams,
- non-aerosol sprays,
- vials,
- pet medications.

Most disposal sites do not accept needles, sharps, aerosols, inhalers or medical waste, but check with your local site to confirm.

While we have set aside April 24<sup>th</sup> for Drug Disposal events this spring, many of our municipalities have permanent, 24/7, drug disposal collection sites to use year round. For more information on guidelines, special events, permanent sites and drug disposal in Wisconsin, please visit [www.doseofrealitywi.gov](http://www.doseofrealitywi.gov). You can enter your zip code to find the closest drop-off location.

Safe drug disposal is very important because it keeps powerful drugs out of the hands of someone who may abuse them or sell them. Old prescriptions in your cabinets are prime temptations for young people to steal, sell or take to parties where miscellaneous, random prescription drugs are abused. Many abused prescriptions are taken from family and friends.

Statistics show that many heroin users start by abusing prescription opioids like oxycodone, Vicodin and other common painkillers that are often prescribed following routine surgeries.

Unfortunately, many people do not understand the extreme danger of abusing prescription drugs. They assume that prescription medications are “safe” because they are prescribed by doctors. But they do not understand that over-dosing and mixing medications can be lethal.

Safe drug disposal is also important to protect our environment. Flushing drugs down the toilet contaminates our water supply. Municipal water treatment cannot remove some very powerful medications from our water. It is also important to keep them out of landfills where they leech into water and may be consumed by animals.

If you have ongoing prescriptions and medications that you keep in your home, consider keeping them in locked storage. For more information on techniques to secure your medications, please contact your county health department or visit [www.lockyourmeds.org](http://www.lockyourmeds.org).

Thank you for taking time to spring clean your medicine cabinet to protect the people in your life and the environment in which we live. Drop-off your old medications today!

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to [Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov). Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.