



OPIOID COMMAND CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2018

Department of Aging Hosts Drug Take Back Event for Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week

Dunmore, PA – The Department of Aging hosted a Drug Take Back Event today at DePietro’s Pharmacy in Lackawanna County as part of **Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week**, a statewide initiative to get the overdose reversal medication naloxone to Pennsylvanians and get help for residents suffering from the disease of opioid-use disorder.

Pharmacy owner Tom DePietro welcomed and thanked all attendees before introducing Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne, who highlighted the urgency behind returning old and unused medication to drug take-back boxes.

“The focus on Get Help Now Week is embedded in the Wolf Administration’s commitment to get help for our fellow Pennsylvanians who are suffering from the disease of opioid-use disorder, and this effort also includes educating our residents about how easy it is to discard unused or expired prescriptions year-round by dropping them off at an authorized drug take back box,” said Secretary Osborne. “Neighborhood pharmacies, like DePietro’s, are making an investment and a difference in this battle by providing sites where we can all do our part to properly and responsibly dispose of our unused prescription medications, and therefore prevent the potential for and overdose.”

Drug take-back boxes provide a safe method for disposing expired and/or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medication, as having unused medicine sitting at home puts it at risk for misuse and abuse. The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs created a [statewide interactive map](#) to help people find the closest prescription drug take-back box to them. Drug take-back boxes can be found at Pennsylvania State Police barracks, police stations and municipal buildings, in addition to pharmacies. There are nearly 700 drug take-back boxes throughout the commonwealth, and since 2014, Pennsylvania has collected and disposed of nearly 400,000 pounds of drugs.

In addition to many pharmacies having drug take-back boxes, as part of Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now Week, residents will be able to go to a state health center or their local pharmacy to get the overdose reversal medication naloxone. This medication reverses the effects of an opioid overdose and gives the patient a chance at recovery.



OPIOID COMMAND CENTER

“We cannot get someone into treatment if they are dead,” Governor Wolf said. “Naloxone saves lives and we should all carry it because you never know when you will get the chance to help someone. This year alone, emergency medical services have saved more than 9,000 Pennsylvanians using naloxone and transported 92 percent of them to the hospital for treatment.”

Since Governor Wolf first signed a heroin and opioid disaster declaration in January, 16 state agencies have continuously worked to fight the opioid epidemic and have made significant progress to help individuals and families dealing with this crisis. Some accomplishments include waiving birth certificate fees for individuals seeking treatment, using federal Medicaid funding in treatment facilities to provide more than 12,000 individuals access to medically necessary treatment, and providing career services to people who have been impacted by the opioid epidemic and plan to return to work.

For more information on Pennsylvania’s response to the opioid crisis visit www.pa.gov/opioids.

MEDIA CONTACT: Drew Wilburne, 717-705-3702

###