



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Commissioner Warns of Vermont's Most Dangerous Leftovers



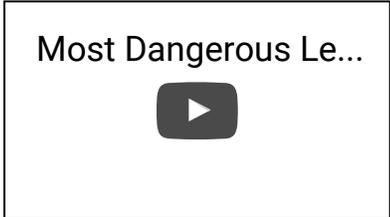
For Immediate Release: November 16, 2015

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BURLINGTON –Prescription drugs are Vermont’s most dangerous leftovers, warns Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD in a new 30-second ad.

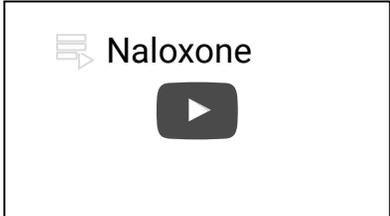
“Most people who abuse prescription painkillers got them from friends or family,” said Dr. Chen, who practiced emergency medicine in Rutland for more than 20 years. “Often, these drugs came straight out of the medicine cabinet. Every one of us can take action to keep drugs out of the hands of those who should not have them.”



Safe use begins with asking: ‘Do I really need this,’ and ‘How much do I really need?’ Dr. Chen emphasizes that you can get addicted, even when prescribed by your doctor and used as directed.

A second ad promotes the use of a drug called naloxone (or Narcan®) that can be used to easily reverse an opiate overdose. Emergency medical responders and some police carry naloxone, “and you can too,” Dr. Chen says in the ad.

In the event of an overdose, anyone who calls 9-1-1 or gives naloxone is protected from liability and certain kinds of prosecution under Vermont law. Call 2-1-1 for sites where overdose rescue kits containing naloxone are available or visit healthvermont.gov.



The PSAs, which were created in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice, will be posted on the Health Department website, and local stations will be asked to air the video and audio ads as public service announcements.

“We are facing an opiate crisis in the state right now, and making sure leftover prescription drugs do not contribute to this epidemic is one way we can prevent addiction and the necessity for treatment in the future,” Dr. Chen said.

United States Attorney Eric Miller added, “Arrests and prosecutions alone will not solve the opiate crisis. That is why we are proud to partner with the Vermont Department of Health to help prevent addiction in the first instance and to promote life-saving interventions such as naloxone.”

To view the videos, visit healthvermont.gov.

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