



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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Clear out your Medicine Cabinet of Vermont's Most Dangerous Leftovers

April 29 is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

BURLINGTON – More often than not, the misuse of drugs begins right at the family medicine cabinet – where prescription painkillers may sit long after they are needed.

These are Vermont's most dangerous leftovers, and state health and public safety officials want Vermonters to know there's something they can do about it.

This Saturday April 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. communities throughout Vermont will host collection sites where people can safely – and anonymously – drop off their expired, unused or unwanted medications as part of National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

Take Back Day is organized in partnership with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. The sites will be staffed by local and state police and county sheriff departments.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said promoting Prescription Drug Take Back Day and appropriate prescribing of medication are key elements of the state's comprehensive efforts to curb opioid drug abuse.

"Anyone can become addicted to prescription opioids," said Dr. Levine. "It's important that patients talk with their doctor about alternatives to opioids, and when prescription opioids are called for, to get the fewest number of pills needed for treatment. And then be vigilant about the safe use, safe storage and safe disposal of any medications," Dr. Levine said. "The longer drugs stay in the medicine cabinet, the more likely they are to fall into the wrong hands."

“National data shows that 80 percent of heroin users began with prescription opioids—that means four out of five heroin users became addicted with prescription drugs,” said Commissioner of Public Safety Thomas D. Anderson. “In Vermont, over 600,000 prescriptions for opioids were written in 2015. Take Back Day is a way for all Vermonters to help ensure unused opioid medications won’t be diverted and misused,” said Anderson.

In a [video announcement](#) available at the Health Department’s prescription drug disposal website, Governor Phil Scott encourages Vermonters to dispose of drugs properly on Take Back Day and throughout the year.

Proper disposal also helps to prevent the environmental contamination that can happen when drugs are put in the trash or flushed down the drain, impacting our waterways, wildlife, pets and people.

To find a Take Back Day or year-round prescription drug disposal site near you, dial 2-1-1 or visit HealthVermont.gov/DrugTakeBack.

Learn more about safe use, safe storage and safe disposal of prescription drugs at healthvermont.gov.

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