

## OSF Champions National Drug Take Back Day

Saturday, April 30 marks the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) 22nd annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Multiple locations throughout Illinois and Michigan will be participating in the event, ready to take unwanted, unused, and expired medications in an effort to reduce misuse.

According to the DEA, there will be at least 225 collection sites set up throughout the state of Michigan and more than 140 in Illinois, including at the OSF Center for Health on Route 91 in Peoria, where OSF Mission Partners are joining the Peoria Police Department in the effort.

Jerry Storm is the senior vice president of Pharmacy Services for OSF HealthCare. He says the main focus of the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is to get unused medication out of people's homes – to keep them out of the hands of those who may be vulnerable to misuse.

"Data shows two thirds of teenagers and young adults that begin their first exposure or the first experience of abusing drugs occurs when they get drugs from the family, they get it from their friends, or they get it from an acquaintance's medicine cabinet," says Storm. "So the drugs are just laying around. It's an opportunity from that aspect to protect teenagers from going down that pathway of opioid addictions."

According to Storm, every day about 3,900 people misuse drugs for the first time. For some, it is the beginning of a life-long addiction that can end tragically.

The CDC reported that last year more than 100,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States, a 28.5% increase from the previous year. Opioid-related deaths accounted for 75% of all overdose deaths in that time period.

This sharp rise is concerning to the DEA and to pharmacy professionals across the board. No demographic is immune to substance abuse and addiction.

"It's a disease, but we don't know which individual is prone to that disease," Storm explains. "A lot of people can take an opioid one time, not be impacted by it. Other people from the very first time they take it, they are prone to go down the path and it becomes an addictive substance."

Despite the danger of having certain medications lying around, many people are hesitant to throw them out in case they are needed down the road. Storm says that can be a big mistake, and that there are always ways to safely dispose of medications.

"Clean out your medicine cabinets. Don't hold on to drugs for a rainy day," recommends Storm. "A lot of people hold on to them for a rainy day and it's not a good practice. It's best once you're no longer taking the drugs to take them back to either one of the drug take back sites, or take it back to a drug take back box at one of the OSF facilities. A lot of retail pharmacies also have drug take back options."

It is not recommended to simply throw these medications in the trash or flush them down the toilet. Pets or children could easily take medications out of the trash and ingest them, and medications flushed into the sewer system can end up in the water supply.

To find a National Prescription Drug Take Back Day collection site near you, visit the [DEA's website](#). If you miss National Take Back Day, there are safe, secure disposal boxes at each hospital across the OSF HealthCare Ministry. All drugs, both prescription and non-prescription, can be dropped off year round in these boxes except needles and sharps, liquids, inhalers, aerosol cans, IV bags and tubes or thermometers. To find an OSF HealthCare drug disposal box near you, visit [osfhealthcare.org/pharmacy](https://www.osfhealthcare.org/pharmacy).