

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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For more information: Hallie Schimenti, Nebraska Pharmacists Association, [402-420-1500](tel:402-420-1500); Joan McVoy, Nebraska Regional Poison Center, [800-222-1222](tel:800-222-1222); Jennifer Wemhoff, The Groundwater Foundation, [402-434-2740](tel:402-434-2740)

**PHARMACIES GIVE OPTIONS TO SAFELY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS**  
**Over 300 Pharmacies in Nebraska Will Take Back Unused Medications**

Lincoln, NE (November 17, 2017) – Consumers across Nebraska are helping prevent accidental poisoning, drug abuse, and overdoses while protecting the environment. How? By taking unused and expired medications back to participating Nebraska MEDS Initiative pharmacies.

Unused medications can fall into the wrong hands and lead to accidental poisoning or misuse. Drug overdoses in Nebraska have tripled since 1999, and 81% of all poisoning deaths are caused by drugs and medications. When flushed, put down the drain, or thrown in the trash, over-the-counter and prescription medications can contaminate water supplies. Most water treatment facilities do not have the capacity to remove these emerging contaminants.

Instead of flushing or trashing those old medications, take them to a Nebraska MEDS Initiative pharmacy. Nearly 320 pharmacies in Nebraska will take back medications, free of charge, for safe disposal. Find a participating pharmacy near you at [www.nebraskameds.org](http://www.nebraskameds.org).

From July 1 through September 30 of this year, 6,823 pounds of medications were returned to these pharmacies, a notable increase from 4,961 pounds collected from January 1 through March 31, 2017.

“As Nebraska MEDS grows, we’ve seen a consistent increase from month to month in the amount of medication returned,” said Hallie Schimenti, Project Coordinator for the Nebraska MEDS Initiative. “Patients don’t need to make a separate visit since medication is being collected at a place they normally visit, such as the grocery store, drug store, or clinic.”

“It’s amazing to see the positive response from participating pharmacies,” Schimenti said. “This is a win-win program. Patients can get rid of their leftover medication, and pharmacies can add a service that emphasizes their efforts to patient care.”

The Nebraska Medication Education on Disposal Strategies (MEDS) Coalition educates Nebraskans about drug disposal and provide safe ways to dispose of them to better safeguard the environment and protect public health. The Coalition includes the Nebraska Pharmacists Association, The Groundwater Foundation, Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department, Lincoln Police Department, Coalition Rx, Lincoln Public School Nurses, LiveWise Coalition, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Hospital Association, Nebraska Medical Association, Nebraska Recycling Council, Nebraska Regional Poison Center, Safe Kids Lincoln-Lancaster County, KETV, Nebraska Attorney General’s Office, and Nebraska State Patrol. The Nebraska MEDS initiative is funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Nebraska Legislature.

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