



Call to Action Parents, Neighbors and Community



Living Safely with Prescription Painkiller Medications requires that we educate ourselves, and our families and that we not “outsource” responsible management of our and our families’ healthcare choices.

1) Medication Management

- a) **“Intended Person, Intended Purpose”** Prescription medications should only be used by the person for whom they were prescribed and only for the specific purpose for which they were prescribed.
- b) **Have the conversation!** Speak directly with your children and teens about the hazards of opiate medicines in your home. Share with them the *intended person, intended purpose* and your expectation that prescribed medications are not to be used by people for whom the medicines were not prescribed.
- c) **Strengthen your skills as a consumer.** Check the painkiller prescription you are provided by your physician *when it is given* and **ask**
 - i) Is this an opiate medication? If yes, what are the risks and precautions you need to manage?
 - ii) Can the amount of opiate medicine be lowered? Request a minimal dose for a minimal time. *Some people are at risk of addiction with one prescription!*

2) Medication/Cannabis Safe Storage

- a) **Out of Sight, Out of Reach.** Opioid medications and cannabis products present the least amount of risk to your family if they are locked in an appropriate medication lock box or similar smell proof locking bag, e.g. household safe.
LOCK IT UP!



3) Medication Disposal

- a) **Deterra Kits:** Small quantities of medication can be safely discarded by using Deterra disposal kits. Once placed inside a Deterra kit, medications are neutralized; the medications are no longer usable or an environmental hazard. When you have placed the maximum amount of medications in a Deterra kit, the entire kit can be safely discarded in the trash.
- b) **24-Hour Medication Disposal Drop-Boxes.** Many area police departments provide 24-hour drop-boxes for disposal of unnecessary and unused medications. This DOES NOT include needles or other sharps, illegal or illicit drugs or any hazardous medical waste. Drop-box location information is available at ahc.stl.org.
- c) **Semi-annual Medication Take-Back Events.** In April and September of each year, area police departments, in partnership with the U.S. Drug-Enforcement Administration, conduct medication take back events. These medication collection initiatives are in addition to the 24-hour drop boxes hosted by some police departments.
- d) **Spread the word** about the drop-box and take-back services. Help elderly relatives or neighbors get to the drop boxes or take-back events.

4) Neighborhood and Community

- a) **“If You See Something, Say Something”** If you encounter a situation or circumstances in which the safety and welfare of youth is in question, report it. If possible, speak directly to the family of the young person(s) involved or call 911. The call you make may very well prevent a tragedy.
- b) **Advocate-** we need our leaders to act on our and our children’s behalf.
 - i) Let your state legislators know the importance of legislation that protects youth and families from the ravages of opiate and heroin addiction. Important examples are the *Prescription Drug Monitoring Program* (HB1892) and the *Good Samaritan Law* (allows a drug user to call emergency help for another drug user).
 - ii) Support local leaders in passing ordinances, e.g. *social hosting*, that reduce youth access to alcohol and other drugs. Often opiate and heroin use begins in the context of other drug and alcohol abuse.
 - iii) Encourage civic, faith-based and school leaders to increase and promote programs that focus on engaging youth in meaningful roles in their neighborhoods and community.

