

***TakeAway* drug disposal program to protect Iowans and the environment**

Iowa is the first in the nation to launch *TakeAway*TM a statewide prescription drug disposal program. *TakeAway* Environmental Return System allows consumers to safely dispose of unused or expired medications through the convenience of drop off boxes in their community pharmacies.

“We care about patient safety and protecting our environment,” said Kate Gainer, Vice President of the Iowa Pharmacy Association. “This easy-to-use consumer take back program will reduce contamination in our waterways and help to prevent prescription drug abuse.”

TakeAway is a new solution to an old, yet urgent problem. “Every day patients ask their pharmacists what to do with expired drugs,” said Gainer who is also a pharmacist. “Before *TakeAway*, we did not have an easy or practical solution.”

When unused drugs get in the wrong hands, the potential for danger is significant. The Office of National Drug Control reports that prescription drugs are the drug of choice among 12- and 13-year olds, while a third of all new abusers of prescription drugs are between the ages of 12 and 17. People who throw away or flush unused drugs down the drain are also creating dangerous situations by polluting our water supplies and landfills. Plus, prescription medicines thrown in the trash may be picked up by children or pets.

“As members of the community, pharmacists are in a prime position to ensure the safe and proper handling of medications, from dispensing to disposal,” said Gainer. “By working together, pharmacists across the state of Iowa hope to make a difference for the environment and their communities through *TakeAway*.”

Visit www.iarx.org/takeaway/ to locate a participating pharmacy in your community and please review the list of acceptable and unacceptable items.

###