

Drug Take-Back Event

Introduction:

The number of drug overdose deaths has never been higher in the US, and over half of drug overdose deaths involve opioids. The CDC has released prescribing guidelines to help healthcare providers know when opioid use is appropriate, but what can communities do to help combat the epidemic? One solution is to host a Drug Take-Back Event where members of the community can drop off unused medication for safe disposal.

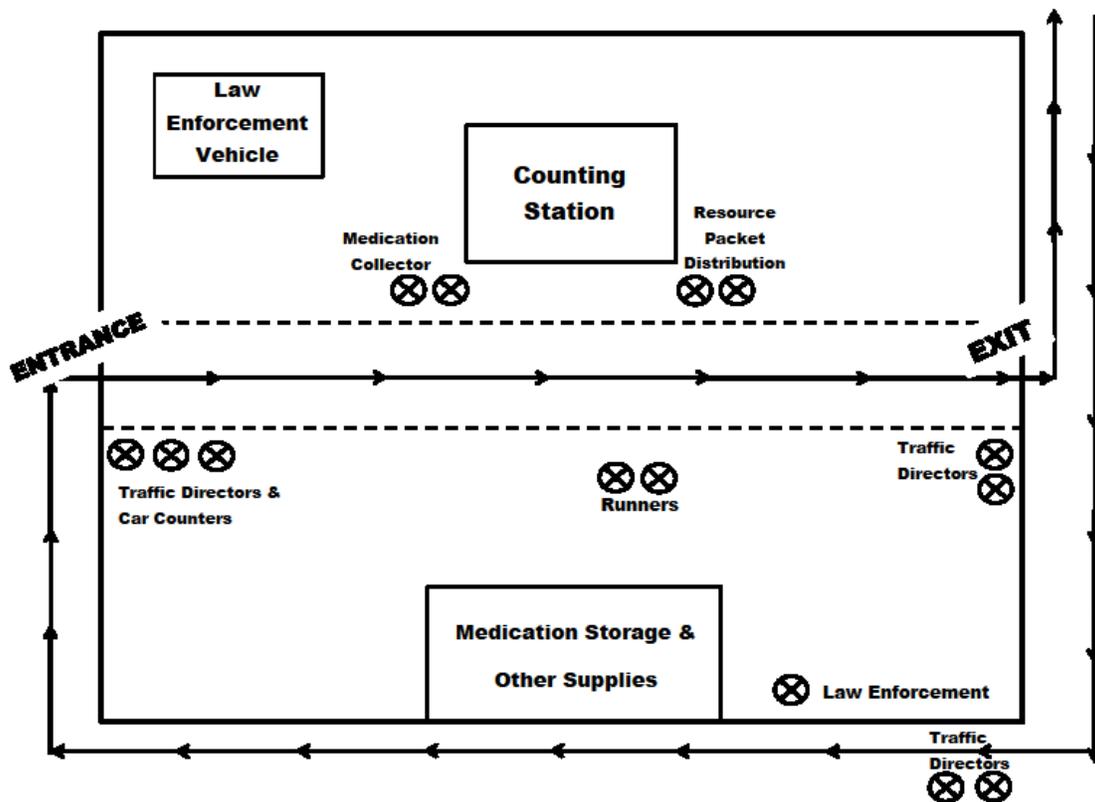
The Shawnee County Collaborative on Chronic Pain hosted a drive-through Drug Take-Back Event for two hours on Saturday, July 15, 2017 and collected nearly 13,000 pills of controlled substances and more than 50 Fentanyl patches, along with a large amount of non-controlled substances (60,000 pills plus 37 pounds of uncounted, non-controlled medication) preventing misuse, diversion, and environmental harm from improper medication disposal. Topeka is home to approximately 130,000 people. Many agencies in the community and 40 volunteers worked together to host the event with funding provided by the Sunflower Foundation. The information in this toolkit largely comes from lessons learned from this event that will help others plan a similar event in their community.

Potential Partners:

- Law Enforcement (**Required**). Ensures safety of volunteers and legal handling of controlled substances. Have law enforcement involved with the event from planning to disposal. Your local DEA agent can be a source of support or can help you identify which local law enforcement agency has experience with take back events. See appendix for DEA guidelines and visit https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/ for more information.
- Local Fire Departments
- Emergency Medical Services
- Addiction Treatment Centers
- Family Service Centers
- Healthcare Organizations including pharmacies, hospitals, behavioral health providers, local health departments, home health, hospice and clinics
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Medical and Nursing Schools
- Safe Kids program and injury prevention partners at the state health department
- Alternative Pain Treatment Centers
- Safety Net Clinics
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Convention Center or other partner with a parking lot

Event Location:

One of the key findings of the Topeka event was that community members appreciated that they did not have to leave their vehicles to drop off their medications for disposal. Many community members who disposed of medication at this event were elderly and benefited from not having to park and walk into a facility. While a drive-thru system for collecting medications is not required, it is highly recommended. The Topeka event was held in a large parking lot at a well-known convention center with easy access to the parking lot via streets with low traffic. The large parking lot allowed us to set up a dedicated entrance and exit to the event to prevent traffic flow problems. If your community is larger, consider having two drop-off lanes.



Event Staff:



Many staff and volunteers worked to make this event a success. Volunteers were needed to:

- Set up and tear down traffic cones, tents, signs, tables, etc.
- Direct traffic and count vehicles
 - 2 at each entrance to point people to the medication collectors and to count cars
 - 2 at event exit to prevent cars from coming in the wrong way
 - As needed to direct traffic depending on the location
- Collect medication from each vehicle
 - 4 per lane allows smooth process for accepting medications and then relocating the medications to the counting station
- Distribute information packets to each vehicle
 - 2 per lane
- Count and record number and type (controlled or not) of medication dropped off
 - 30 people to count pills are recommended, especially if a mechanical auto-counter is not available. Fewer pill counters can be utilized if they are prepared to spend time after the event counting the medications.
- Runners to move medications to and from the counting station, from the counting station to the storage location, and to deliver water or other supplies to volunteers as needed.

Volunteer Job Descriptions:

Traffic Control

Number of volunteers needed: 10 – 20 depending on the size of your community and event location.

Have enough volunteers that people have a chance to take a break if they need one.

Qualifications: Able to stand for 2- to 4-hour period; able to command and direct vehicles.

Volunteer will –

- Direct traffic to the proper entrance to maintain flow and minimize bottle necks
- Instruct cars to be prepared to hand medications from car window
- Inform driver/passenger they are not to exit their vehicle
- Count vehicles (two volunteers will use a clicker to count vehicles)



Resource Distribution

(Have handouts in a bag for easy distribution.)

Number of volunteers needed: 2-4

Qualifications: Able to stand for 2- to 4-hour period; able to direct vehicles; able to read and explain resource materials.

Volunteer will –

- Hand bag of resources to each vehicle
- Inform driver to place care in PARK when handing meds to collector
- Remind there is no need to exit vehicle
- Distribute sharps containers, disposal bags, or other resources given to community members to use for future medication disposal

Medication Collection

Number of volunteers needed: 4-6

Qualifications: Able to stand for 2- to 4-hour period.



Volunteer will -

- First remind driver to put car in PARK
- Accept medications from driver/passenger
- Ask driver/passenger if they have additional medication at home for disposal or if they need a sharps container to take home.
 - If driver/passenger reports having additional medication at home, ask the amount of medication to determine if a large or medium Deterra bag should be provided.
 - Hand driver/passenger Deterra bag, if applicable
 - If driver/passenger reports having sharps at home, provide the driver/passenger a small sharps container

Materials:



1. Containers to store medication for disposal
 - a. It is important to determine a disposal method before purchasing any deactivation products! Some landfills do not accept liquids and consider the Deterra buckets liquid waste. Some may consider the Deterra buckets as medical waste. Consult with your local waste management in advance.
 - b. We used Deterra-brand drug deactivation products for disposal of controlled substances. Thirty 5-gallon Deterra buckets were utilized for this event. Each bucket holds 2600 pills. If funding is not available for on-site disposal systems such as Deterra products, work with law enforcement to determine what procedures and containers will be required for your event. Deterra products for this event, including both the buckets utilized at the event and the bags that were distributed to members of the community, cost approximately \$4000.
 - c. 100 small or medium Deterra Bags were distributed to community members who told volunteers that they have more medication at home that should be discarded.
 - d. 10 large sharps containers are recommended for on-site medication collection. 45 small sharps containers were distributed to community members who need one at home.

- e. Incineration may be a more viable option if your funding for deactivation products is limited. Discuss incineration options with local law enforcement.
2. Water
 - a. Drinking water for volunteers
 - b. Deactivation products may require warm water
3. Sunscreen for volunteers
4. Signs for advertising and directing people to the event
5. Disposable Medical Gloves
6. Scissors
7. Hand Sanitizer
8. Automatic Pill Counter (optional)
9. Counting Trays
10. Shade Tents or an indoor location for counting
11. Traffic Cones
12. Safety Vests for everyone
13. Markers to cross out names on prescription bottles
14. "Clicker" to track number of cars attending event
15. Recycling bins or other disposal system for empty medication bottles
16. Trash bin or other method for disposing vitamins and OTC meds that do not need to be deactivated and are safe to throw away
17. Trash bags
18. Dog biscuits (optional – but many cars that drove through had dogs)
19. Educational materials for distribution (see appendix)



Advertising:

Having large number of organizations collaborating to host the event will connect the event to multiple sources of advertising and communication. The opioid crisis is a hot topic in the news and local news organizations will likely be interested in running a story before, after, and/or during the event. Have a spokesperson prepared to communicate with local news and local organizations about the opioid crisis and the take back event. When advertising the event, ask people to leave their medications in the original package or to write the name of the medication on the container for identification and counting purposes. Educating people about how to dispose of OTC medications, vitamins, etc. at home may reduce the number of medications dropped off during the event that could safely be disposed at home.

Other considerations:

- Ensure easy access to restrooms for volunteers.
- Do we really need to count all those pills? It depends. The deactivation Reporting the amount of pills collected is a meaningful way to communicate to the community and any funders about the

success of your event. It is especially important to count controlled substances. If your event is short on volunteers to count pills, consider counting controlled substances and weighing non-controlled substances. Most DEA events simply collect the medication and incinerate everything including the packaging that the medication came in. Frequently medications are weighed to report how much was collected and destroyed, but weighing and incinerating all types of medications together does not give an accurate count of how many controlled substances were prevented from being diverted.

- Volunteers from the medical community who have the skills necessary to identify unlabeled medication will be required for an accurate count of controlled substances. Community members will bring in medications in a variety of containers.
- If funding is not available for suitable disposal methods to distribute to the community for later use, at least have a printed resource prepared with information about local drop-off locations for medication disposal. The DEA maintains a drop-off location finder on their website at <https://apps.dea diversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s1>.
- Community members will want to know what organization(s) is running the event. It is a good idea to have police cars parked in a visible location to give credibility to your event.
- Media releases: Have volunteers sign a media release. Give any volunteer who does not consent to being photographed a bright-colored wrist band so they are easily identified in photos.



Public Locations to Dispose Controlled Substances in Kansas

Scott City Pharmacy, Scott City

Grant County Drug, Ulysses

Oakley Health Mart Pharmacy, Oakley

Kiowa County Pharmacy, Greensburg

Main Street Pharmacy, Coldwater

USAF – 22nd, McConnell Air Force Base

Wellington Health Mart Pharmacy, Wellington

Kay's Pharmacy, Herrington

The Medicine Store, Tonganoxie

Koechner Pharmacy, Atchison

Saint Luke's South, Overland Park

KU Hospital

-2015 W 39th KCKS

-2330 Shawnee Mission Pkwy, Westwood

US Army

-IACH Pharmacy, Fort Riley

-Munson Health Center, Fort Leavenworth

Walgreens

-3333 E Central Ave, Wichita

-555 N Maize Rd, Wichita

-1001 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka

-7739 State Ave, Kansas City

-7500 Metcalf Ave, Overland Park

-1445 S. Main Street, Ottawa