



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kootenai County Taking Back Unwanted Prescription Drugs for National Drug Take Back Day

HAYDEN, ID – It is always the little things that can make a big difference. On Saturday, April 27, from 10am to 2pm, several agencies in Kootenai County will give the public the opportunity to prevent prescription pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs at the 17th annual National Drug Take Back Day. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. **National Prescription Drug Take Back Day** locations are listed on the DEA website: <https://takebackday.dea.gov>

Every 36 hours an Idahoan dies from a drug overdose. Every 5 days an overdose involving prescription opioids claims a life in our state. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a community that has not been touched by the opioid crisis. Here in Kootenai County, opioid misuse and abuse has become a pressing health issue and surveys show that most abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet.

The good news is we can all take steps to combat this problem, like ensuring that prescription medicines are safely stored, and any unused, unwanted or expired medicines are properly disposed. Last fall, Americans turned in nearly 460 tons (more than 900,000 pounds) of prescription drugs. Overall, in the previous 16 National Take Back Days, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and local partners across the U.S. have received almost 11 million pounds (nearly 5,500 tons) of pills.

Check your medicine cabinet. Are there any prescription pain medicines? If you're no longer dealing with the issue for which these pills were originally prescribed, dispose of them as soon as possible so they don't fall into the wrong hands.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, an estimated 54 million people over the age of 12 in the U.S. have used prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons in their lifetime. In fact, 25 percent of people who misused prescription drugs by age 13 ended up with an addiction at some point in their life. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicine – flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash – both pose potential safety and health hazards.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day locations are listed on the DEA website: <https://takebackday.dea.gov/>. Take a moment to take a look and see what location is nearest to you.

To find a **permanent prescription drug take-back location** near you, visit <https://odp.idaho.gov/> and search by zip code.

Panhandle Health District and the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office believe that everyone in our community can be part of the solution — because only by doing the little things can we hope to make a big difference.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office participates in Panhandle Health District's Prescription Opioid Solutions workgroups with the goal of reducing addiction and death associated with opioid use disorder. The workgroups focus on prevention, harm reduction, access to treatment and community resources. Other entities that participate include healthcare, schools, police, youth services, recovery centers and more.

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.