



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 21, 2021

**Media Contact:** Katherine Hoyer

(208) 415-5108

## **Panhandle Health District Hosts National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Event**

**PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT-** Empty out your medicine cabinet this Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day! Panhandle Health District (PHD) is hosting a free and easy drive-thru drop off from 10am-2pm at their Hayden location (8500 N. Atlas Rd. Hayden, ID).

“This is an important community event where parents, grandparents, those with children in the home, and anyone else can safely dispose of their unused medication,” said Malia Nogle, Health Education Specialist at PHD and event coordinator. “I’m not just saying that as the coordinator of the event, but I am also a mother who wants to keep her own kids safe by taking this easy and convenient precaution.”

Drug Take Back Day is a simple and safe way to dispose of unused and expired medications. At the PHD Take Back event they will accept all unused and expired medication, not just opioids, in pill and liquid forms. The North Idaho AIDS Coalition will also be participating in the event and will accept sharps that need disposed of and have their mobile HIV testing unit on site. All services are free and anonymous, no questions asked. Additional community partners that will be at the event include Heritage Health Restored Paths, Ideal Option, and St. Vincent de Paul to offer their own resources and services to those who need it.

According to the Board of Pharmacy, in 2020 the North Idaho region was the second highest opioid prescribing region in the state. **There were enough opioids prescribed that 88% of residents in the region could have their own individual prescription.**

“Check your medicine cabinet. Are there any prescription pain medicines?,” said Nogle. “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 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 9.7 million people misused prescription pain relievers, 4.9 million people misused prescription stimulants, and 5.9 million people misused prescription tranquilizers or sedatives in 2019. The survey also showed that most misused prescription

drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that certain methods for disposing of unused medicine – flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash – both pose potential safety and health hazards.

Each year there are two Take Back Days, one in the spring and one in the fall. According to the Office of Drug Policy (ODP), the April 2021 Take Back Day resulted in the disposal of 2.9 tons (or 5829lbs) of medication in Idaho. If you miss the event, there are several locations across the region that offer medication disposal services. To find a location near you, check the ODP website: <https://odp.idaho.gov/prescription-drug-take-back-program/>

# # #

**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.