

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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## VA invites the public to dispose of unused medications and prescriptions during nationwide ‘VA Medication Take Back’ days

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of Veterans Affairs is inviting the public to participate in the annual VA Medication Take Back Days, to safely and securely dispose of unused or expired medicine — including controlled substance prescriptions.

The upcoming VA Medication Take Back Days are Oct. 28 and 29, and all 341 VA medical facilities across the country will be open for drop offs.

VA encourages all Americans to properly get rid of opioids and all unused or expired medications — in secure receptacles — to promote safe usage and help fight the nation’s opioid overdose epidemic.

Veterans and others should contact the local VA Medical Center in their area for event information.

“VA is opening our doors to the public for Medication Take Back Days because disposing of expired and unused medicine is critical to keeping Veterans and all Americans safe,” said **VHA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** “It’s important for each of us to go through our medications regularly and dispose of them appropriately. By taking this small but significant action, we are not only protecting ourselves, but we are also protecting our families, friends, and others from accidental poisoning or overdosing.”

This effort is in line with the [Dispose Unused Medications and Prescription \(DUMP\) Opioids Act](#) signed into law by President Joe Biden July 29, 2021. It couples alongside the [Opioid Safety Initiative](#), [VA Pharmacy Benefits Management Services](#) and [VA’s Opioid Overdose Education & Naloxone Distribution program](#).

VA is a national leader in reducing opioid prescribing and dependency. Since establishing the National Pain Management Strategy and [Opioid Safety Initiative](#), the department has successfully reduced opioid prescribing overall by approximately 65%.

Additionally, 379,400 Veterans have received more than 795,400 prescriptions for Naloxone from 42,700 VA health care professionals. Of that, 2,935 reported overdose reversals have been identified through August 2022.

VA’s Medication Take Back Days coincide with the Drug Enforcement Administration’s [National Prescription Drug Take Back Days](#). DEA holds twice yearly National Prescription Take Back Days, in April and October. Individuals unable to participate in VA’s Medication Take Back Days can use DEA’s [Public Disposal Locations Search Tool](#) to find year-round authorized collection sites.

Veterans enrolled in VA care can bring their expired or unused medications to their VA Medical Center site of care for disposal any time by contacting their local VA Police Service or VA Pharmacy.

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