NEWS RELEASE
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NEBRASKA PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION RECEIVES FUNDING FOR STATEWIDE MEDICATION TAKE-BACK PROGRAM

The Nebraska Pharmacists Association (NPA) has received funding from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Waste Reduction and Recycling Incentive Grants Program for its Nebraska MEDS: Statewide Medication Disposal Initiative. The primary goal of this project is to engage, activate and empower pharmacies statewide to serve as safe and legal waste medication collection sites for leftover consumer medications.

An ongoing USGS research study has shown that 142 streams, 55 wells, and seven effluent samples collected across 36 states had traces of a variety of waste pharmaceuticals and other emerging contaminants. In Nebraska, seven streams and aquifers in the eastern portion of the state were included in the study. At least one chemical was detected in low levels in 80% of streams and 93% of groundwater sampled.

Over the past several years, a coalition of partners have come together to address the issue of unused medications and their impact on the aquatic environment and groundwater; poison prevention; and illegal drug diversion. The NebraskaMEDS (Medication Education for Disposal Strategies) coalition includes the following partners: Nebraska Pharmacists Association, The Groundwater Foundation, Nebraska Regional Poison Center, WasteCap Nebraska, Dillon’s House, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, Lincoln-Lancaster County SafeKids, Guardian Angels Senior Homecare, Lincoln Police Department, LiveWise Coalition, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

The Nebraska MEDS Coalition has pilot-tested a medication take-back program in Lincoln and Lancaster County which currently has 41 pharmacies that have collected well over 3,500 pounds of unwanted consumer medications. With this success, NPA will work with the Nebraska MEDS coalition to expand the project statewide in order to collect unused medications to prevent poisoning, pollution, and prescription drug overdose for a healthier Nebraska.

Watch for the Nebraska MEDS disposal project coming soon to your community. Residents will be able to safely dispose of medications from their home safeguarding the environment with the goals of reducing the risk to children, and saving the community money that might be spent responding to water quality concerns and/or medical emergencies such as accidental poisoning or prescription drug overdose. Any questions about the project can be addressed to the Nebraska Pharmacists Association at 402-420-1500.

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The Nebraska Pharmacists Association represents over 1,300 members consisting of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy students, pharmaceutical representatives and other pharmacy advocates. NPA advances the profession of pharmacy by providing members services and innovative programming. For more information contact Marcia Mueting at Nebraska Pharmacists Association, 402-420-1500 or marcia@npharm.org.

The Groundwater Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska with a mission to educate people and inspire action to ensure sustainable, clean groundwater for future generations. Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has offered various educational programs for youth and adults. To learn more, visit www.groundwater.org.