



East Providence Prevention Coalition  
*Promoting Healthy Lifestyles in East Providence*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**As the Nation's opioid epidemic surges during COVID, East Providence residents have opportunity to dispose of expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs**

**East Providence, RI** – With opioid overdose deaths increasing during the pandemic, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announces its 20<sup>th</sup> Take Back Day is scheduled for April 24, 2021. The DEA will partner with the East Providence Police Department and the East Providence Prevention Coalition (EPPC) for this spring's Take Back Day, continuing a decade-long partnership. At its last Take Back Day in October, the DEA collected a record-high amount of expired, unwanted, and unused prescription medications, with the nation's public turning in close to 500 tons of unwanted drugs, with 226 pounds being collected right here in East Providence.

On **Saturday, April 24, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** the DEA, the City of East Providence, the East Providence Police Department, and the EPPC will once again provide residents the opportunity to prevent prescription drug misuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs. **The event will be held at the East Providence Police Station located at 750 Waterman Ave.** The service is safe, free, confidential, anonymous, environmentally friendly, and most importantly could save a life.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. has seen an increase in overdose deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 83,544 Americans overdosing during the 12-month period ending July 1, 2020, the most ever recorded in a 12-month period. The increase in drug overdose deaths appeared to begin prior to the COVID-19 health emergency, but accelerated significantly during the first months of the pandemic. Unfortunately, Rhode Island has not escaped this increase in overdose deaths, with 384 Rhode Islanders fatally overdosing in 2020.

In addition to preventing overdose deaths, the Take Back Day initiative addresses the vital public safety and public health issue of prescription drug addiction. According to DrugFree.com, 90 percent of prescription drug addictions begin in the teenage years and Rhode Island has the startling statistic as leading the nation in teens abusing drugs. As many as 1 in 4 teens report taking a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them, with most obtaining them from their parents, friends or family member's medicine cabinet. In addition, state health officials have seen an increase in teens misusing over-the-counter substances, like Tylenol, to attempt suicide.

“Medicines that languish in home medicine cabinets are highly susceptible to misuse, abuse and theft. Rates of prescription drug misuse are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs,” EPPC Coordinator Madeline Marlow said. “We must do all that we can to stem overdose fatalities and reduce access to these substances.”

With studies indicating a majority of misused prescription drugs come from family and friends, including from home medicine cabinets, clearing out unused medications is essential in preventing unauthorized access and overdose deaths.

DEA and its partners will collect tablets, capsules, patches, and other solid forms of prescription drugs. Liquids (including intravenous solutions), syringes and other sharps, and illegal drugs will not be accepted. DEA will continue to accept vaping devices and cartridges at its drop off locations provided lithium batteries are removed.

Clean out your medicine cabinets and join other residents on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2021, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the East Providence Police Station. To keep everyone safe, collection sites will follow local COVID-19 guidelines and regulations.

Helping people dispose of potentially harmful prescription drugs is just one way the DEA, the East Providence Police Dept. and the EPPC is working to reduce addiction and prevent overdose deaths. For more information about the April 24<sup>th</sup> Take Back Day event, go to [www.DEATakeBack.com](http://www.DEATakeBack.com). For more information regarding substance misuse prevention, contact the East Providence Prevention Coalition at [eppc@eastprovidenceri.gov](mailto:eppc@eastprovidenceri.gov) or call 401-435-1923 x 11190.

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