

Keeping unused meds out of the wrong hands just got easier

SEP 10, 2014

Staff News Writer

In the midst of a prescription drug epidemic, new federal regulations released Monday expand take-back options for patients to safely dispose their unused prescription drugs and prevent misuse of these controlled substances.

The regulations, issued by the Drug Enforcement Administration, are intended to increase the availability of secure disposal programs. Entities now authorized to administer mail-back programs and maintain collection receptacles include retail pharmacies, hospitals and clinics with on-site pharmacies, and certain manufacturers and distributors.

Authorized hospitals, clinics and retail pharmacies also will be permitted to maintain collection receptacles at long-term care facilities. And law enforcement will be able to continue conducting take-back events, coordinating mail-back programs and maintaining collection receptacles

“Prescription drug abuse and diversion is a complex problem, and we have long advocated for a public health approach to combat the epidemic,” AMA President Robert M. Wah, MD, said in a statement.

In addition to take-back programs, Dr. Wah said, “important initiatives include educational opportunities about addiction prevention for physicians and patients, increased access to treatment programs, modernized and fully funded prescription drug monitoring programs, and increased access to overdose prevention measures such as the life-saving medicine naloxone.”

The AMA has been helping to shape how the nation addresses the prescription drug abuse crisis on a variety of fronts—from state-based legislation and programs to youth education to expansion of addiction treatment programs.

“We look forward to continuing our work with the DEA, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and other stakeholders to stop prescription drug abuse, overdose and death while preserving access to medically necessary treatment for pain,” Dr. Wah said.