

Preventing the abuse of Prescription Medicine

New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) and Project Medicine Drop (NJMPMD)

consumer *brief*

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that prescription painkiller overdoses now kill more people in the U.S. than heroin and cocaine combined. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, two in five teenagers mistakenly believe prescription drugs are “much safer” than illegal drugs; and a N.J. State Commission of Investigation found that in a growing trend, N.J. teens who abused prescription drugs went on to become addicted, and turned to heroin use. Each year, thousands of New Jerseyans enter addiction treatment programs due to prescription drug abuse, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration suggests that those numbers are increasing at an alarming rate. **New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program** and **Project Medicine Drop** are two important components of New Jersey's effort to prevent the abuse and diversion of prescription drugs.

WHAT IS THE N.J. PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM?

The **NJMPMP** is a statewide database that collects prescription data on Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS) and Human Growth Hormone (HGH) dispensed in out-patient settings in New Jersey, and by out-of-state pharmacies dispensing into New Jersey.

Access to the **NJMPMP** is granted to prescribers or pharmacists who are licensed by the State of New Jersey and in good standing with their respective licensing boards. Patient information in the **NJMPMP** is intended to help prescribers and pharmacists provide better-informed patient care. The information helps to supplement patient evaluations, confirm patients' drug histories, and document compliance with therapeutic regimens. When prescribers or pharmacists identify a patient as potentially having an issue of concern regarding drug use, they are encouraged to help the patient locate assistance, and to take any other action the prescriber or pharmacist deems appropriate.

The **NJMPMP** serves as an effective tool for identifying

those who fraudulently obtain prescription drugs or are otherwise involved in the criminal diversion of prescription medication. The information reported to and made available through the NJMPMP helps to detect individuals who may be “doctor shopping” – visiting multiple doctors to obtain prescriptions for the same medication that they then have filled at different pharmacies, in order to obtain more of the prescribed substance than any one physician or pharmacist would allow.



The **NJMPMP** also aids in detecting “pill mills” – a doctor's office, clinic, or other healthcare facility that regularly colludes in the prescribing

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and dispensing of controlled substances outside the scope of the prevailing standards of medical practice, and in violation of New Jersey law on the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances.

PATIENT PRIVACY AND THE NJPMP

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs and its private contractor keep **NJPMP** patient information strictly confidential, in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy and Security Rules. Prescribers and pharmacists authorized to access the **NJPMP** must certify that they are seeking data solely for the purpose of providing health care to current patients. Authorized users agree that they will not provide access to the **NJPMP** to any other individuals, including members of their staff. Users who inappropriately disclose **NJPMP** information are subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000 and disciplinary action by the individual's professional licensing board.

For further information, contact the **NJPMP** Administrator at NJConsumerAffairs.gov/pmp, njpmp@dca.lps.state.nj.us or 800-242-5846.

WHAT IS THE NJPMD PROGRAM?

The safest and most secure way to dispose of unused medications is through New Jersey's **Project Medicine Drop**. In partnership with local law enforcement agencies, the Division of Consumer Affairs has made it as easy as possible for you to safely and securely dispose of your unused medications. Secure, metal **PMD** drop boxes are located at many local and state police departments and law enforcement agencies. Mobile boxes that can travel to fairs and other community events are available as well.

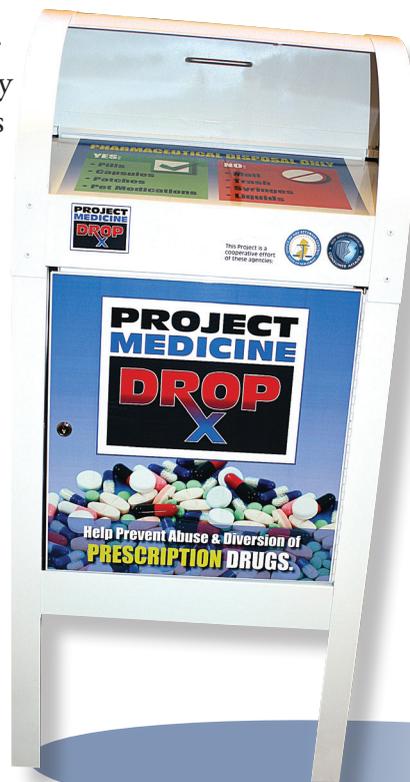
Project Medicine Drop boxes are available to the public 24/7/365— and the contents are secured and destroyed by law enforcement officers authorized to handle them. New Jersey residents can visit their nearest drop box location and dispose of their unused medications—no questions asked. It's that simple. Please be aware that **Project Medicine Drop** boxes only accept household medications, and only accept solid materials such as pills and capsules. Also, please note that before disposal of a medicine container, be sure to scratch out any prescription information such as your name and address, in order to protect your identity.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE PROJECT MEDICINE DROP LOCATION NEAREST TO ME?

Visit NJConsumerAffairs.gov/meddrop or call 800-242-5846 to find the **Project Medicine Drop** location nearest to you, or for additional information.

Everyone must take responsibility to help stop the abuse and diversion of prescription drugs. This includes law enforcement and regulatory agencies, doctors and pharmacists, pharmaceutical companies—and everyday citizens.

The New Jersey Office of the Attorney General and the Division of Consumer Affairs have created the **NJPMP** and **NJPMD** programs in order to help curb the use and abuse of prescription medications by keeping track of their usage and access, and by ensuring that New Jersey's citizens have the availability to dispose of their unused prescription and over-the-counter medications in a simple, convenient and environmentally responsible manner.



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