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NEWS RELEASE

PHA Teams Up with Penn Home Care and Hospice, Attorney General to Announce Free Drug Disposal Pouches for Hospices

Bala Cynwyd, Pa. (July 28, 2017)— The Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) and Penn Home Care and Hospice teamed up with Attorney General Josh Shapiro yesterday to announce that 50,000 pouches were distributed to Pennsylvania hospices to combat the opioid problem and assist families with destroying the drugs that so often fall into the wrong hands.

The Attorney General's office reached out to PHA to assist with distributing the pouches, which were donated by Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, to hospices in the counties that have been hit hardest by the opioid epidemic. The drug pouches can deactivate up to 45 unwanted pills when warm water is added and the pouches are sealed. The pouches can then be safely disposed of in the trash.

“When a family loses a loved one, there are so many arrangements to be made and grief to work through – the last thing on the family’s mind should be figuring out what to do with any leftover narcotics,” said PHA CEO Vicki Hoak. “PHA is so thankful for the generosity of Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals and the Attorney General in providing this convenient tool to hospices and families across Pennsylvania. These drug disposal pouches are easy to use and thanks to this generous donation, hospices will now be able to give them to 50,000 families so they can properly dispose of any unused narcotics and concentrate on what really matters: each other.”

Joan Doyle, Executive Director of Penn Home Care and Hospice Services, said that hospices are at the forefront of promoting safe and effective pain relief with the use of opioids. “Many of these drugs are originally prescribed legally, yet thousands get into the wrong hands every year,” Doyle said. “Today we’re partnering with PHA and the Attorney General to combat this critical public health problem and save lives.”

Through the drug disposal pouch initiative, Attorney General Shapiro is making sure the families of hospice patients have a safe way to dispose of Schedule II narcotics following the death of their loved one. The pouches will be provided to families upon a person’s admission to hospice care, which is mostly provided in the home. In Pennsylvania, an estimated 66,000 people receive hospice care each year.

“Our partnership with the homecare and hospice community will make it safer and easier for families to dispose of unused prescription drugs following the death of their loved one,” said Attorney General Shapiro. “Eighty percent of heroin addicts start with the abuse of prescription drugs, and the vast majority of those who misuse these drugs got them from friends, relatives or a medicine cabinet.”

“We would like to thank Penn Home Care and Hospices Services, the PA Homecare Association and every hospice provider in Pennsylvania that has joined us,” Attorney General Shapiro said at the news conference, where he was joined by a family member of a former patient, Montgomery County Commissioner DA Kevin Steele, Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Chair of the Montgomery Commissioners, County Commissioner Ken Lawrence Jr. and Rep. Tim Briggs. “By working together, we can get unused prescription drugs out of circulation and make sure they never wind up in the wrong hands,” Shapiro said.

Photo: <https://pahomecare.memberclicks.net/assets/images/Connections/shapiro%203.jpg>

About PHA... The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of more than 700 homecare and hospice providers. PHA members provide quality care and serve as advocates for their patients and clients on a variety of healthcare related issues. PHA and its members work hard to improve professional standards and ensure access to quality homecare throughout the Commonwealth. To learn more, visit www.pahomecare.org.

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