

# Dept. of Justice: AG Schimel celebrates record breaking Drug Take Back Day, distributes more than 2,300 doses of naloxone

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel today announced that Wisconsin had a record breaking Drug Take Back Day, with a preliminary collection of 66,100 lbs. The October 2018 collection is the largest preliminary weight in the history of Wisconsin’s nationally recognized program. The 71 pallets of unused medications filled three semi-trucks. Combined with the May 2018 collection, 2018 is the most successful year of Wisconsin’s Drug Take Back Program. During the drug collection process, Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) also distributed thousands of life-saving doses of the life-saving opioid antidote, NARCAN nasal spray to more than 220 Wisconsin law enforcement agencies.

“Since day one as Attorney General, the opioid epidemic has been my top public safety priority,” said Attorney General Schimel. “What continues to give me hope in this fight is the number of Wisconsinites committed to helping us fight this opioid epidemic by turning over thousands of pounds of unused medications. I thought this collection would have slowed down by now, but this record-breaking collection proves that there are many more people who need to clear out their medicine cabinets. This prevention effort, both the administering of naloxone and the collection of meds, is what will ensure we aren’t still fighting this epidemic in a decade.”

Since 2015, the DOJ has collected and disposed of nearly 470,000 lbs. of unused and unwanted medications.

Utilizing discretionary funding, approved by the Joint Legislative Committee on Finance, DOJ purchased over 2,300 doses of naloxone nasal spray to be distributed to local law enforcement. DOJ surveyed over 550 law enforcement agencies regarding their naloxone programs. DOJ found 71 agencies that wished to start a naloxone program, and wanted to receive doses of the nasal spray. DOJ found that hundreds of agencies which have existing naloxone programs needed more doses of the nasal-spray. Therefore, as part of the Drug Take Back prevention initiative this fall, DOJ is distributing naloxone nasal spray to 223 responding agencies. The Wisconsin State Patrol is helping distribute the naloxone doses this week.

“Efforts like Drug Take Back, along with distribution of naloxone to emergency responders, are helping us carry out our primary mission to enhance public safety and save lives,” Wisconsin State Patrol Colonel Charles Teasdale said. “Since January 19, 2018, all State Patrol officers were trained and equipped to administer naloxone. So far, State Patrol officers have used naloxone to play a role in reviving 15 people, including a law enforcement officer who was exposed to the opioid Fentanyl during a vehicle search.”

Statewide, 303 police and sheriffs’ departments hosted 145 Drug Take Back events on or around October 27. Throughout the years and across the state, law enforcement agencies, pharmacies, and hospitals have installed 419 permanent drug disposal drop boxes. These boxes give citizens a convenient, environmentally-friendly, and anonymous way to dispose of unused medications all year long. Proper drug disposal is essential to preventing prescription painkiller abuse and protecting the environment. Research has shown that 70% of initial painkiller abuse starts when drugs are obtained improperly from family members or friends.

Once again, Wisconsin was a national leader on Drug Take Back Day this October. For multiple collections, Wisconsin had more law enforcement agencies participate in the biannual event than any other state in the country. Year after year, Wisconsin has been one of the top three states in the nation to have the largest collection totals. Only Texas and California have ever collected more unused drugs and medications.

Drug Take Back Day is a collaborative effort between public and private sector partners and would not be possible without the support of Covanta Energy, Fuchs Trucking, Indiana State Police, Waukesha County, Waukesha County Sheriff’s Office, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources,

Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, Wisconsin National Guard, Wisconsin State Patrol, U.S. DEA, and each of the 303 law enforcement agencies who participated in this October's Drug Take Back Day.

The more than 66,000 lbs. of prescription drugs were boxed, palletized, shrink wrapped, and secured in three Fuchs Trucking semi-trailers for transportation to Covanta Energy Corporation in Indianapolis, where the drugs will be incinerated in November. The weight of unused medications reported is preliminary. An official weight, which is expected to rise, will be assigned by Covanta Energy prior to destruction.

Naloxone nasal spray is an FDA-approved medication for the emergency treatment of prescription opioid, fentanyl, and heroin-related overdose. It is a ready-to-use, needle-free, 4mg dose in a single spray. Its design makes it easy for both medical and non-medical personnel to administer a concentrated naloxone dose to quickly restore breathing to those who are experiencing an opioid overdose. In addition to being used to revive members of the public, naloxone has also been used to save law enforcement after exposure and accidental overdose. For example, in February 2018, naloxone nasal spray was used to save a Waukesha County sheriff's deputy's life after they were exposed to an unknown substance during a traffic stop.

For more information, go to [www.DoseofRealityWI.gov](http://www.DoseofRealityWI.gov).