

# Pitch Your Pills

## Campaign Fact Sheet



### OVERVIEW

Guided by the belief that proper disposal of prescription & over-the-counter medication is an essential activity to ensure the health of every community, the Pitch Your Pills campaign works to prevent abuse, protect the environment and prevent accidental poisoning. As a public awareness effort lead by the Seminole Prevention Coalition, it seeks to ensure that all residents of Seminole County are informed about the benefits of proper drug disposal and have access to a safe, convenient and environmentally friendly way to dispose their unused Rx and over-the-counter medications.

Proper medication disposal has made significant gains in awareness and infrastructure in recent years, but the concept faces challenges before widespread awareness and adoption is achieved. The Seminole Prevention Coalition works closely with many partners — across both the public and private sectors — to help Seminole County and its residents accept proper disposal as an everyday habit and ultimately ensure a healthy community both now and in the future.

### OUR PRIORITIES

#### Infrastructure

A strong infrastructure gives residents a simple and convenient way to safely dispose of their unused, unwanted or expired medications. We work together with local partners including police departments, the Sheriff's Office and county Health Department to establish disposal sites that are easily accessible from anywhere in Seminole County.

- Pitch Your Pills has purchased five drug disposal boxes for local law enforcement agencies, increasing the number of permanent disposal locations in Seminole County to 11.
- Pitch Your Pills will continue to support the addition of new sites in Seminole County and welcomes contact from any organization which would like to have a disposal box at their location.

As research and legislative priorities continue to emphasize the importance of proper disposal the network of drug collection sites must expand to keep pace. A few short years ago global health leaders paid little attention to medication disposal and merely suggested unused or expired medications be flushed. Today, research shows the clear benefits proper disposal has and Pitch Your Pills will continue to build a strong disposal infrastructure for our residents.

#### Awareness

We're focused on helping both medication consumers and prescribers understand and promote the benefits of proper disposal to ensure it becomes a widely accepted practice.

- Pitch Your Pills seeks to provide prescribers with resources to improve communication with patients regarding proper drug disposal benefits and easily accessible locations.
- We are building awareness about proper disposal among medication consumers through a range of social marketing activities and use of the media to reach specific audiences with targeted messages.

Recycling provides a perfect example of how an entire nation can adopt an activity that once seemed unimportant. Delivering a consistent message about the benefits of proper disposal, building a strong infrastructure of easily accessible drug collection sites and seeking new communication channels will ensure our residents adopt proper medication disposal just as recycling has become a habit for the majority of Americans.

#### Collaboration

We believe strong collaboration between the Seminole Prevention Coalition, local organizations and agencies will ensure the long-term success of Pitch Your Pills. Distinguished by its collaborative nature, Pitch Your Pills unites entities with a wide range of interests together by a common goal. We work closely with local partners to plan for success, build infrastructure, promote benefits of proper drug disposal and increase the amount of drugs collected at each site in Seminole County.

## Collaboration (continued)

- Unique collaboration with local law enforcement agencies has produced a remarkably strong drug collection infrastructure in Seminole County as all 11 sites are currently at law enforcement locations.
- Campaign partners play a critical role in providing insight into strategies for success and introducing new entities who share a mutual interest in promoting proper medication disposal.

Pitch Your Pills will continue to actively build collaboration throughout Seminole County and the state with the goal of increasing use of drug disposal locations and the importance it has on our community's health.

## BENEFITS OF PROPER DISPOSAL

### Reduces risk of abuse

Prescription drug abuse is the #1 health epidemic facing our nation and a large part of the problem is unused drugs are kept around rather than being disposed in a safe manner. If not disposed of properly, the prescription medications in your house can be stolen and re-sold by family members, friends and others.

- 70% of nonmedical prescription pain reliever users obtain their drugs for free from a friend or relative. We understand if this statistic surprises you because most of the time these medications are taken without your knowledge or permission.
- This activity is a leading cause of abuse and it's especially true regarding teenagers. 56.5 percent of teens obtain prescription medications from friends or relatives.

### Protects the Environment

Proper disposal of your prescription drugs protects the environment and eliminates the risk of medications contaminating Florida's natural resources. Research shows medication residues leach into water systems, posing serious threats to wildlife. Traces of hormones, antibiotics, anti-depressants, tranquilizers, beta blockers and other chemicals derived from prescription medications are found in our water and have been linked to development problems in fish and frogs. Flushing your medications down the toilet or throwing them away in the garbage (unless specifically directed to do so) causes harm to the environment.

- Antibiotics, anti-depressants, mood stabilizers and hormones have been found in the drinking supply of 46 million Americans and have been detected in the drinking water of 24 major metropolitan areas.

### Prevents Accidental Poisoning

Proper disposal of unused prescription drugs reduces the risk of accidental poisoning. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, medicines are the most common poison exposure category in the United States and unfortunately, when medicines are not stored or discarded properly, people can get sick and/or die.



- As late as 2003, out of the 78,000 children younger than 5 who were treated for poisonings in U.S. hospital emergency rooms, 45 percent were attributed to medicines.
- Senior citizens, who are the biggest consumers of Rx medications, can get sick due to the consumption of expired medicines stored in the home. Use of these drugs to treat new problems can result in confusion over dosages, which medicines to take, etc.

## CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

**The Altamonte Springs Police Department**

**The Casselberry Police Department**

**The Lake Mary Police Department**

**The Longwood Police Department**

**The Oviedo Police Department**

**The Sanford Police Department**

**The Seminole County Sheriff's Office**

**The Florida Department of Health in Seminole County**

**The Seminole County Medical Society**

**The Winter Springs Police Department**

## THE SEMINOLE PREVENTION COALITION

The Seminole Prevention Coalition is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization which exists to build a healthy, safe and substance-free community in Seminole County. We accomplish this by building collaboration among community partners to address risk factors. Rather than providing a hand out, which inevitably leads to dependency and failed projects, we seek to transform Seminole County from the inside out, enabling residents to be the agents of change within their own context.

Policy change, enforcement, education and support are core objectives within our prevention strategies. As members of the Seminole Prevention Coalition, local organizations, businesses, agencies and individuals are united together for the achievement of a common goal. We believe a safe, healthy and substance-free community is built in large measure through effective and strategic prevention initiatives. This fosters a stronger community, healthier families and an improved quality of life in Seminole County.

Learn more and become a member of the coalition online at [SeminolePreventionCoalition.org](http://SeminolePreventionCoalition.org)