



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Berrien County Health Department Brings Awareness to Prescription Drug Abuse**

**Benton Harbor, Michigan, Oct. 26, 2022** – As Drug Take Back Day approaches on Oct. 29, the Berrien County Health Department Substance Use Disorder Prevention Team and the Voice. Change. Hope. Alliance are highlighting the issue of abuse of prescription drugs.

According to the National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, prescription medications are the fifth most abused substance in the U.S. Their abuse involves using prescription medications in a way not intended by the prescribing physician. This could include someone other than the prescribed patient using a medication or taking a medication in a different method than prescribed, such as injecting a medication that is meant to be taken as a pill.

Improper use and disposal of prescription medication can have many negative effects, including addiction and death. BCHD is seeking to educate community members on how they can prevent prescription drug abuse, especially among teens.

“When used correctly, prescription drugs can be an effective form of treatment for many medical conditions – but when abused, they can have devastating effects,” said Lisa Peeples-Hurst, public health promotion and prevention supervisor. “We’re hoping to inform community members of steps they can take to limit the risk of prescription drug abuse in their home, especially by children and teens.”

Signs that someone may be abusing prescription drugs include:

- Stealing, forging or selling prescriptions.
- Taking doses beyond the recommended amount in quantity or frequency.
- Mood swings, hostility, unusual sleeping habits and poor decision-making.
- "Doctor shopping," or seeing an excessive number of medical professionals.

Talking to the children and teens in your life can be one of the greatest factors in preventing prescription abuse. Research shows that children whose parents are engaged and hands-on in their day-to-day lives are less likely to misuse prescription drugs.

Engage with children and teens in your life regularly and set positive examples of healthy prescription medication use. For tips on starting the conversation at any age, visit [talksooner.org/talking-tips](http://talksooner.org/talking-tips).

Other important steps you can take to prevent prescription drug abuse is to keep medication out of reach from children and dispose of prescriptions properly and in a timely fashion. To locate a safe disposal site near you, visit [bit.ly/BCHDSafeDisposal](http://bit.ly/BCHDSafeDisposal).

To learn more about Drug Take Back Day and find location sites near you, visit [dea.gov/TakeBackDay](http://dea.gov/TakeBackDay).

For more information about preventing prescription drug abuse, visit [berriencounty.org/1821/Rx-Drug-Abuse-Prevention](http://berriencounty.org/1821/Rx-Drug-Abuse-Prevention) or contact Lisa Peebles-Hurst at 269.927.5690.

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