

SWOSU Fraternity Helps with Disposal of Unused Medications

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Phi Delta Chi professional pharmacy fraternity in Weatherford and the Red Rock West Area Prevention Resource Center have partnered to offer a solution to the disposal of unused medications.

The SWOSU fraternity has established collection sites at three participating Weatherford pharmacies: Allen Pharmacy, Inc. (521 E. Franklin); More Than Medicine (101 W. Main); and The Medicine Shoppe (1001 N. Washington).

Each pharmacy has agreed to accept unused medications and hold them for pickup by members of Phi Delta Chi. The fraternity will then dispose of them in an environmentally safe manner as suggested by the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy.

Dr. Steve Pray, professor in the SWOSU College of Pharmacy and co-sponsor of PDC, said most everyone has a problem in what to do with medications that are no longer needed.

"It is a bad idea to save them with the idea that they may be useful at a later time," Pray said. "The medication may have expired while you were waiting to use it. You must always see your prescriber when a new illness occurs."

Disposing of these unused medications correctly is not easy. Pray said if a person throws them in the trash, someone might find them and use them, causing injury. If someone flushes them or puts them down the garbage disposal, the drugs enter the water supply, where they could potentially be dangerous. And, a person should never give the drugs to someone else, even a family member. Pray said that could be deadly for the recipient.

Pray said there is a further problem with allowing unused medications around the house.

"Drug abuse is at epidemic levels," Pray said. "Teens have been known to raid their parents' medicine cabinets, bringing all types of medications to school."

Pray said there are stories about what some students are doing with drugs. One such story has a leader mixing a variety of pills together. Then, each teen takes a handful of medications chosen at random. Pray said this is a deadly situation that should never be allowed to happen and reducing the number of medications around the house helps stop this frightening practice.