



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

## Senator Rich Funke, Wegmans School of Pharmacy, Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals Launch Safe Medication Disposal Campaign

RICH FUNKE November 17, 2016



The Wegmans School of Pharmacy at St. John Fisher College announced a new effort to fight prescription medication misuse in the Rochester region. The School, in partnership with the Rochester Area Society of Health System Pharmacists (RASHP), New York State Senator Rich Funke, and Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, will distribute 7,000 medication deactivation pouches to community agencies, encouraging the safe disposal of unused prescription medications.

“Un-needed medications open the door for both intentional and unintentional abuse in our community,” said Dr. Matthew Zak, assistant director of experiential education in the School of Pharmacy and president of RASHP. “We’re thrilled to be working with so many entities that realize the importance of this initiative both on a local and national level and are committed to finding solutions to this public health issue.”

The user-friendly pouch deactivates prescription medications safely and quickly. After filling the specially formulated pouch with unused medication and regular tap water, it can be sealed and thrown away with the household trash. Pouches are completely biodegradable and safe for landfills. Mallinckrodt, a leading global specialty pharmaceutical company, is donating the pouches as a part of their nationwide 1-million pouch campaign.

“As a company focused on the health and well-being of our patients and communities, Mallinckrodt has long been a strong advocate of addressing the complex issues of opioid misuse and abuse that cause so much harm to families,” said Mark Trudeau, Mallinckrodt president and chief executive officer. “We share the concerns of parents across the nation, and believe that providing patients with a safe, environmentally responsible way to dispose of unused medications is critical in this fight against prescription drug abuse. Mallinckrodt is committed to working with policy makers, community leaders, law enforcement and industry partners to ensure the responsible use of pain medication and prevent unused medications from ending up in the wrong hands.”

As a member of the New York State Senate’s Joint Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Funke called the pouch distribution program an important effort in combating medication misuse.

“When I hosted the Heroin & Opioid Task Force for a public hearing here last year, we heard over and over again that prescription drug abuse often serves as a gateway to heroin

addiction,” said Funke. “Whether it’s the student athlete who gets hooked on a prescribed opiate, or a child who finds an unfinished supply in the medicine cabinet, one of the best ways to decrease the likelihood of dependency is to ensure proper disposal. I thank Fisher and Mallinckrodt for pioneering this innovative solution to better protect families across our region.”

The campaign also includes an awareness component; in addition to distributing the pouches, community agencies will receive educational brochures on the safe use and disposal of medication.