



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

6.2.18 - Community Helps “Shed the Meds” in Johnson City

FRED AKSHAR June 2, 2018

| ISSUE: **SHED THE MEDS, COMBATING HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION; SHED THE MEDS**



(JOHNSON CITY, NY) On Saturday, June 2, Senator Fred Akshar partnered with representatives from United Health Services, the Broome County Sheriff's Office, the Johnson City Police Department and the Southern Tier AIDS Program for a “Shed the Meds” prescription turn-in event at the Oakdale Mall in Johnson City. Volunteers collected over 400 pounds of prescription and over-the-counter medication, including 334 bottles of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances with an estimated street value of over \$50,000.

In addition to dropping off old prescription pills, community members participated in free Narcan training held at the UHS Stay Healthy Center in the Oakdale Mall and provided by the Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP). Upon completion of their training, each trainee received a free Narcan kit.

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“This was our most successful Shed the Meds event yet,” said Senator Fred Akshar. “It’s so inspiring to see our community continue to stay engaged and working together to be part of the solution to the heroin and opioid epidemic. As I have traveled the 52nd Senate District listening to parents and families, I’ve heard repeatedly that their children’s opioid addiction started from prescription medication. My message to the community is please get rid of your old prescriptions, it helps keep them out of the wrong hands and could save a life.”

Broome County Sheriff Dave Harder said, "Whether it's narcotics enforcement or helping those struggling with addiction in our jail, the Sheriff's Office has always been at the forefront of the heroin and opioid epidemic. I jumped at the opportunity to partner with Senator Akshar in an effort to get harmful prescription medication off our streets and I'm thankful for the community partners like UHS and STAP who ultimately make our mission successful."

Johnson City Police Chief Brent Dodge said, "It is encouraging to see the outstanding results from Saturday's 'Shed the Meds' event. It was a pleasure to team up with Senator Akshar and to participate in his important initiative to bring further training and awareness to the opioid epidemic and to rid area households of potentially dangerous prescription drugs."

STAP Executive Director John Barry said, "STAP is appreciative of Senator Akshar's

leadership on this issue and his willingness to recognize and use harm reduction approaches like overdose prevention to save lives."

This event continues Senator Akshar's commitment to fighting the heroin epidemic – as a Co-chair of the Senate Heroin Task Force and passing legislation to enhance prevention, treatment and recovery for heroin addiction.

Over the past two years, Akshar's Shed the Meds events across the 52nd Senate District collected over 900 lbs. of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, getting an estimated street value of \$230,000 worth of drugs off the street, according to local law enforcement officials.