



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara says Saturday's 'Drug Take-Back Day' important in the ongoing fight against abuse and addiction, praises local efforts

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 22, 2021

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Elmira, N.Y., October 21—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today reminded area residents that Saturday, October 23, 2021 is National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

Law enforcement agencies across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions will operate drop-off centers to allow for the safe and responsible disposal of unused prescription drugs.

"It's incredibly important that our local law enforcement leaders continue to participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Their ongoing leadership in this overall effort to combat prescription drug abuse makes all the difference," said O'Mara, noting that the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in partnership with local police agencies and other community organizations coordinates the annual events across the nation.

On Saturday, Sheriff's offices throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions have established drop-off centers to allow people to anonymously dispose of unwanted prescription drugs between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Following is a listing of local collection sites being offered throughout O'Mara's 58th Senate District covering Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins and Yates:

> **Chemung County:** The Chemung County Sheriff's Office will accept unwanted prescription drugs at the following two locations: Southport Volunteer Fire Department (1001 Carl Street) and West Elmira Fire Department (1299 W. Water Street, Elmira).

> **Schuyler County:** The Schuyler County Sheriff's Office will accept unwanted prescription drugs at the following two locations: Tyrone Volunteer Fire Department at 3600 State Route 226, and the Odessa Volunteer Fire Department at 300 E. Main Street.

> **Steuben County:** Steuben County Sheriff's Office will participate at the Steuben County Public Safety Building, 7007 Rumsey Street Ext., Bath.

> **Tompkins County:** Tompkins County Sheriff's Office will participate at the Kinney Drugs location at 2100 Triphammer Road in Ithaca, and the Kinney Drugs location on Route 96 in Trumansburg.

> **Yates County:** The Yates County Sheriff's Office will conduct an event at the Yates County Courthouse, 415 Liberty Street, Penn Yan.

In 2018, O'Mara sponsored a new law, the "Drug Take Back Act" (S9100/A9576, Chapter 120 of the Laws of 2018) that established an industry-funded, statewide pharmaceutical drug take-back program. It advanced a "product stewardship" approach to the challenge of disposing of unwanted medications. Pharmaceutical manufacturers are responsible for all of the costs of the initiative including public education and awareness, as well as the collection, transport and proper disposal of unwanted drugs. The Act further requires chain pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies to provide consumers with on-site collection, prepaid mail-back envelopes, or other federally approved methods to encourage safe drug disposal.

O'Mara said the Act created a unified, statewide drug take-back program that helps save government and taxpayer dollars, and reduce medication misuse.

"The abuse of prescription drugs is directly tied to and in many ways responsible for the burgeoning opioid epidemic. It's incredibly important to do anything and everything we can to complement and support the efforts of our local law enforcement leaders to combat prescription drug abuse. These efforts include National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and other initiatives to encourage the collection and disposal of unused prescription drugs," said O'Mara.

The federal Centers for Disease Control has identified the abuse of prescription medicine as one of the nation's fastest-growing drug problems with nearly 15,000 people dying every year

of overdoses due to prescription painkillers. Moreover, an estimated 70 percent of people who abuse prescription painkillers obtained them from friends or relatives who originally received the medication from a prescription. The problem is of particular concern with respect to young adults and teens.