

March 23, 2017

**State Rep. Addia Wuchner Announces
Spring Clean Northern Kentucky to Prevent Drug Abuse and Protect Our Community**

Free Drug Disposal Pouches Now Available to Help Families Safely Dispose of Medications

Government officials, local drug prevention coalitions, local pharmacists and others gathered today to launch in new initiative to help Northern Kentucky residents safely dispose of any expired or un-needed medications, especially opioid pain medication and other narcotics, to help prevent misuse, abuse or addiction. To facilitate safe disposal, a total of 6,000 drug disposal pouches are now available for free to Northern Kentuckians at multiple locations, including all Kroger pharmacies in Northern Kentucky.

“Just as drug addiction often begins in the medicine cabinet, our spring cleaning needs to start there as well,” said Rep. Addia Wuchner (R-Boone County), Chair of the House Committee on Health and Family Services and a Registered Nurse, who spearheaded the drug disposal pouch initiative. “Medication disposal pouches are safe, effective, easy to use and provide one more option to protect our communities by making sure that unused prescription pain medications and narcotics are disposed of safely and are not accidentally or intentionally misused.”

Representative Wuchner began working with Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals last spring on the Clean Sweep NKY concept. The drug disposal pouches were donated by Mallinckrodt and use patented technology to neutralize the active ingredients in opioid painkillers and other drugs in pill, liquid and transdermal patch forms. A proprietary activated carbon bonds to pharmaceutical compounds when water is added, rendering the drugs ineffective and safe for disposal in any setting, including the home. “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,” added Trudeau. “Mallinckrodt is committed to working with health care providers, 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.”

Access to prescription pain killers has been tied to future heroin use. Research from the National Institute on Drug Abuse found that nearly half of young people who inject heroin surveyed in three studies reported abusing prescription opioids before starting to use heroin.

Distribution of the drug disposal pouches in Northern Kentucky is a collaborative effort among several groups, including Rep. Wuchner, Rep. Kim Moser (R-Kenton County), county drug prevention coalitions, law enforcement, the Northern Kentucky Health Department, senior services, Kroger pharmacies and, other local pharmacies and others.

“As Northern Kentuckians continue to work together to fight the heroin epidemic in our community, we must take steps to prevent misuse or abuse of prescription pain medications and narcotics,” said Rep. Moser, who is also a Registered Nurse and the Director of the Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy. “Providing information and access to safe disposal options is one way to do that.”

In addition to the drug disposal pouches, medications can also be safely disposed of using the 16 dropboxes located in police and sheriff's offices throughout Northern Kentucky.

For a list of locations distributing the drug disposal pouches, or for a list of prescription drug drop boxes, please visit <http://www.nkyhealth.org/heroin-response.aspx>

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