Prescription Drug
Safe Disposal Programs

Emily Dean
Bay Area Council on Drugs & Alcohol (BACODA)
Outline

- Why do we need safe disposal programs for prescription drugs?
- How does this affect waste disposal?
- What local solutions & resources has BACODA helped develop through our community coalitions for substance abuse prevention?
The Problem
20% of Texas youth have used prescription drugs for the purpose of getting high before they graduate high school. (Texas School Survey, 2018)
The #1 point of access is the medicine cabinet of family members and friends.
Prevention Strategies to Reduce Youth Rx Abuse Rates

- Reduce easy access within the home and community
- Facilitate safe disposal
- Educate parents, teachers, and other adults who serve youth
- Promote positive alternatives for youth within the community
- Equip first responders and law enforcement with overdose reversal
Figure 2. Socio-ecological model for alcohol and other drug use

---

How does this affect waste management?
What do most people do with their unused meds?

- Flush down the toilet
- Throwing away in regular trash
- Keep them unlocked
- Keep them locked
- Safe disposal
A visual of the dose of heroin, fentanyl and carfentanil needed to kill an average adult.

Photo courtesy of Paige Sutherland/NHPR
Potential Risk to Water Safety

- “Infectious outbreaks remain the most critical concern in low-income countries, while the chemical and pharmaceutical pollution is the major health risk in developing and high-income countries.”

Potential Risk to Water Safety

- Few systematic monitoring programs
- “The most appropriate approach to minimize the presence of pharmaceuticals in drinking water and reduce human exposure is to **prevent or reduce their entry into the water** environment through a combination of **prevention measures**, including:
  - Increased **communication to the public** on rational use of pharmaceuticals and disposal of pharmaceuticals (e.g. avoid flushing drugs down the toilet)
  - **Education of prescribers**
  - **Systematic drug take-back programs**

Local Solutions
In the last 5 years, BACODA prevention coalitions were able to:

1. Build local awareness and capacity for prescription drug abuse prevention
2. Develop community agreements with local law enforcement
3. Leverage federal and state funding streams such as the Texas Targeted Opioid Response (TTOR)
4. Install 16 permanent Rx Drop Boxes throughout our service area in local police departments
Other Safe Disposal

Deterra Disposable Pouches
Thank You

emily.dean@bacoda.org