

# Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month

**WHEREAS**, prescription opioid painkiller misuse and abuse is a public health issue with long-term health consequences, including limitations in daily activity, impaired driving, mental health problems, trouble breathing, overdose, and death; and

**WHEREAS**, more Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than in motor vehicle crashes; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2011 over 1.4 million drug-related emergency department visits in this country were attributed to misuse or abuse of prescription drugs, exceeding the 1.25 million visits involving illicit drugs; and

**WHEREAS**, in Alameda County, deaths from opioid misuse tripled between 2005 and 2014; hospitalization for opioid-related, non-fatal overdoses increased by over 74 percent; and

**WHEREAS**, in the last five years, Alameda County's Emergency Medical Services Division treated over 4,436 patients with naloxone to reverse the effects of drug overdoses; and

**WHEREAS**, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services has worked to expand the availability of buprenorphine, a safer treatment alternative for those who are physically dependent on opiates; and

**WHEREAS**, three Alameda County coalitions are working together to reduce prescription opioid misuse and abuse: The Alameda County MEDS Coalition raises awareness and promotes safe prescription drug storage and disposal, the Alameda County Safety Net Working Group on Opioid Prescribing is developing community-wide standards and expanding training opportunities for safe and effective prescribing for chronic pain, and the Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association is working with private providers and hospital emergency departments for safe prescribing; and

**WHEREAS**, together, these coalitions are educating the medical community and the public about prescription drug abuse, including prevention activities and programs, safely storing medications, take-back programs for safe disposal of unused medications, and convenient access to naloxone, a medication that reverses an opioid overdose; and

**WHEREAS**, Alameda County and its community partners have participated for a decade in grassroots efforts to educate the public on the importance of proper medication disposal and to fund and provide locations for 30 collection kiosks for unwanted medications; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2012 Alameda County was the first municipality in the nation to pass the Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance, which requires drug producers to create and fund programs for the safe collection and disposal of residents' unwanted medications; and

**WHEREAS**, in February 2015 the County approved a product stewardship plan submitted by the Alameda MED-Project LLC to comply with the Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance, which includes education of the public and collection and disposal of unwanted medicine from county residents, and has more than 300 pharmaceutical producers as participating members; and

**WHEREAS**, in November 2015 Alameda County became the first local municipality to require pharmaceutical and sharps manufactures create and fund programs for the safe collection and disposal of used sharps and needles when it passed the Safe Consumer-Generated Sharps Disposal Ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, the general public and their families, schools, businesses, faith-based communities, law enforcement, medical professionals, county and local governments, health care practitioners, and pharmacists of Alameda County will demonstrate their commitment to the prevention of prescription medication abuse by participating in activities to highlight local efforts during the month of March; and, now therefore be it

**PROCLAIMED**, this Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, State of California, does hereby recognize March 2016 as **Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month**.

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**Scott Haggerty, President**  
Supervisor, First District

March 1, 2016

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**Wilma Chan, Vice President**  
Supervisor, Third District

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**Richard Valle**  
Supervisor, Second District

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**Nate Miley**  
Supervisor, Fourth District

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**Keith Carson**  
Supervisor, Fifth District