

SCDS Opioid Task Force

If you are keeping unused prescription pain medication in your medicine chest, you may be unknowingly fueling the flames of the opioid crisis. Of the 1.2 billion opioid prescriptions dispensed (2012-2016), 70% remain unused and are available for abuse (Deterra). That number is staggering. Prescription opioids have been identified as the major method of introduction for heroin abusers, and a disproportionate number of young adults are being caught in this vicious web. In fact, a recent study found that one in every five deaths of Americans age 25 to 34 was opioid-related (JAMA). Drugfree.org reports, “two-thirds of teens who report abuse of prescription pain relievers are getting them from friends, family and acquaintances”. Worse still, 40% of teens that abuse opioids reported they got them from their parent’s medicine chest (AFMC).

In response to the challenge to lead the way in preventing opioid misuse in our community, SCDS President Dr. Andrea Company has appointed an Opioid Task Force. OTF members are Dr. Laura Albrecht, Dr. Brian Ash, Dr. David Ash, Dr. James Fanno, Dr. Garrett Heck, and Dr. Michael Winick, with co-chairs Dr. Andrea Company and Cindy Winick. The purpose of the task force is to investigate ways in which our dental community can better engage in the battle against the opioid crisis, and to facilitate the implementation of said methods of engagement.

The Opioid Task Force has started a pilot project using Deterra Drug Deactivation System pouches to facilitate the proper disposal of unused opioid medication. Deterra System pouches are easy to use, and they are scientifically proven to be an effective, environmentally friendly way to permanently deactivate these medications. The pilot group will offer free educational materials and mid-sized disposal system pouches to their patients. After a few weeks, the OTF will assess the project’s success and then, if approved by the SCDS Board, the program will be made available to the general membership. Deactivation keeps drugs out of the wrong hands, and may prevent potential users from meeting opioids in the first place. Watch for email blasts in the coming weeks!!

Dr. Company is challenging you, her friends and colleagues, to use a Deterra System pouch to deactivate and dispose of any unused medications you have in your homes! We can make a big difference by taking this first step. Please contact a member of the SCDS Opioid Task Force and request one of our Deterra System Pouches, and then use the pouch and mail in the prepaid postcard acknowledging your participation. You will be helping us kick off the program, and more importantly, you may be saving a life!

Thank you for all of your conscientious efforts as we commit to ending this crisis.

Drug Deactivation: A Solution to an Epidemic



Prevention is more than just dispensing less, it's about removing the abundant supply of prescription opioid pills from circulation to prevent abuse and misuse.



1.2 billion
Opioid prescriptions
dispensed from
2012 to 2016



70%
of prescriptions
remain unused
and available
for abuse

Every day,
2,500 American
kids abuse a
prescription drug
for the first time



3 of 4 people
addicted to heroin
reported they first used
a prescription opioid

115 people
die per day from an overdose
of prescription painkillers
in the U.S.



Deterra® is the only scientifically proven drug deactivation system on the market that PERMANENTLY deactivates the drug rendering it unavailable for abuse or diversion.

DeterraSystem.com