

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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New Program Allows Medication Donations for Needy Patients

The Wyoming Department of Health's new Medication Donation Program will pave the way for important, potentially life-saving medications that are sometimes thrown away to be donated to a Wyoming resident who needs them.

The voluntary program establishes a process allowing healthcare providers who sign up to accept and dispense qualified donated medications to Wyoming residents. Created by the Wyoming Legislature in the 2005 session, the program will be administered by the Wyoming Department of Health's Office of Pharmacy Services.

“For the first time in Wyoming, patients and their families will be able to donate certain unneeded medications,” said State Pharmacist Roxanne Homar. “These drugs can then be dispensed to another resident, with an appropriate prescription, who lacks the resources to purchase the needed medication.”

Homar said an example of where the program can apply is when a patient passes away without using the supply of medications he or she may have had on hand. “That person's family may choose to donate the remaining medications,” she explained.

Details of the new program include:

- *To be accepted, medications must be in their original, unopened, sealed packaging, or in sealed unit dose, tamper-evident packaging.

- *Narcotics (typically pain medications such as Percocet or Oxycontin) or medications with specific temperature storage requirements can not be accepted.

- *All program medications must go through normal patient care channels.

- *Medications can only be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist or by a licensed practitioner with prescribing authority.

“It will no doubt take some time to get the program fully up and running,” Homar said. “We are working to build a distribution network with local pharmacists, physicians and healthcare facilities who have volunteered to support this effort.”

“While this program does not offer a comprehensive prescription drug solution for Wyoming patients, it is a wonderful opportunity for sharing critical medication that might otherwise go to waste,” Homar said.

For more information about the Medication Donation Program, contact the Office of Pharmacy Services at 307-777-6923 or toll free at 800-438-5785.

Homar also noted that some residents who are having trouble affording their medicines may benefit from the Prescription Drug Assistance Program, which is a separate, state-funded program designed to help low-income clients who do not categorically qualify for Medicaid with prescription costs. Eligibility for the program is determined by local Department of Family Services offices. For a list of how to contact these offices, please call 1-800-457-3659.

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