Protecting Your Opioid Medication

Why should I protect my opioid medications?

Opioids are strong pain medications that can cause life threatening breathing and sometimes heart problems when not taken correctly.

Thousands of people die every year because of opioid abuse and misuse

The majority of opioids (narcotics) that are taken or stolen and abused, sometimes causing death, come from the homes of people who have been prescribed them for pain. These individuals may not been careful about looking after them.

The number of people dying from these abuses now exceed the number of deaths from car accidents in in many States.

You are responsible to use your medicaion safely and to keep it from being abused by someone who does not have a prescription

Steps to Get There

- Do not share your medications with anyone.
- Limit access to you ropioid medication to you and your caregiver only
- Lock your medications in a locking cabinet or safe box and secure the key. Medication boxes with a combination lock can be bought from various stores
- Keep them out of reach of any children.
- Do not use a bathroom cabinet. These rarely lock and are the first place any stranger or visitor in your house will look.
- Make sure that you have the correct number of pills when you get your prescription and count the number you have left on a regular basis. If you are short, discuss it with your immediate family or anyone else you share your house with.
- If you are missing any medications, change the place where you keep the locked container and change the lock
- Evaluate the risk you have in your home for diversion and abuse
 - Presence of young children
 - o Presence of young adults or adolescents
 - Visitors or family who may have a history of drug abuse, or addiction or mental health care problems
- Dispose of your unused opioid pain medication as soon as it is no longer needed.
 - o Mix with used cat litter or soil and dispose of in the garbage
 - o Remove from the bottle or package and flush down the toilet.
 - For fentanyl or buprenorphine patches, open the unused patches, fold the sticky sides together and flush them down the toilet
- Remember: Not only is stealing narcotics a federal offense, it is also taking away the medication that you need for your pain.
- If you do suspect someone has stolen your prescription medicine, report it to your local police department. You may save the thief from tragedy or even save a life.

I have read and understood the importance of being careful and responsible about my pain medications. I have taken steps to ensure my medications are kept safe from being taken and misused.

Signed:	Date
Witness	Date