

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Elizabeth A. Smith, Ph.D.  
Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety  
6300 West Loop South, Suite 288  
Bellaire, Texas 77401  
Telephone: 832.778.7777; Fax: 832.778.7778  
Email: easmith@comofcom.com  
Website: www.comofcom.com

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Communities Now Has a Resource to Get Rid of Unused and Expired Medicines from Home**

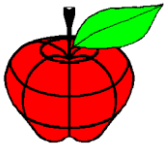
(BELLAIRE, TEXAS – September 16, 2011) The nonprofit Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety, a research group specializing in patient safety research and education, has been leading a national study on the dangers of excess medicines and unused medicines in the homes. These medicines are often expired but kept indefinitely in cabinets and drawers where children, teens, adults—anyone—to steal and abuse them.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration and many substance abuse experts, home is now the primary source of prescription drug abuse. Communities across the nation are concerned about the issues of unused and expired medicines (UEMs), as Americans consume about half of the annual global production of all prescription medicines and about 70 percent of all opioids manufactured on our planet.

Patients and consumers have access to abundant amounts of medicines, and they generally stockpile them at home, workplace and school. When these medicines become unwanted and must be disposed of, many communities are challenged with finding a safe and legal system to collect and destroyed UEMs. Several models of a drug take-back system now exist, ranging from drop-off boxes at the pharmacy or police station to drug collection events and direct mail-back system operated by the U.S. Postal Service and private companies.

Matthew C. Mireles, President and CEO of Community Medical Foundation, urged that “there are not many rational reasons for patients and consumers to hoard medicines at home, creating safety risks for the household, or to indiscriminately flush UEMs down the sink or toilet, which may pollute the water system.” In 2004, Community Medical Foundation created the National Unused & Expired Medicines Project to study the impact of UEMs on public health and patient safety.

-- MORE --



**Page 2**

The Project included the launch of the National Unused & Expired Medicines Registry to collect information about drugs that were returned to community-based take-back systems. Early findings from the Registry with various samples of total drugs collected show that about 50% of all medicines returned were never used by consumers.

In 2008, the Annual Survey was initiated to identify all existing and operational drug take-back programs in the nation. Results from the Survey are published in the only National Directory of Drug Take-Back and Disposal Programs and made available to the public. The second edition of our National Directory lists 492 drug take-back programs, locations and contacts. Communities and households can use this National Directory to find the nearest drug take-back event or program. Some are using it as part of a preventive strategy to prevent or reduce substance abuse, drug diversion, environmental protection, medication mistakes, accidental poisoning, and improper drug donation and recycling.

The next step for the Project is to measure the effectiveness of drug take-back programs in the communities, in terms of the number of participants, volume and types of UEMs collected, cost, and actual lives saved. Mireles believes one day a well-designed regional or national take-back system, similar to that of Europe or Australia, would be introduced to help consumers get rid of UEMs. He also believes that we all can be more responsible and prudent about how much medicines we are consuming, so that stockpiling of UEMs would not exist.

###

**About Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety**



Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety, established in December 2003 as a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt, active learning organization based in the Houston area, is a leader in patient safety research and education. Our mission is to *promote and support patient safety through research, education, and the demonstrated practice of patient-centered health care*. On behalf of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has recognized and listed Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety as Patient Safety Organization #29.

---