KAISER PERMANENTE PARTNERS WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TO TAKE BACK UNWANTED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

PANORAMA CITY, Calif., April 24, 2017 — Kaiser Permanente, in partnership with local law enforcement agencies, is encouraging community members in Southern California to participate in the 13th “National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day” on Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Prescription drug take-back programs provide local residents with a convenient way to safely dispose of expired, unwanted or unused medicines.

Kaiser Permanente medical centers throughout Southern California will serve as drop sites for the disposal of expired, unwanted and unused medicines. Residents may bring their medications for disposal to any of the participating Kaiser Permanente medical centers. The drop off location for Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center will be outside Medical Offices 3. The service is free, easy and anonymous. (Anyone unable to participate on April 29 can also purchase “mail back” postage-paid envelopes at Kaiser Permanente and many other pharmacies in Southern California.)

“Medication safety is at the core of our mission in caring for our members and the communities we serve,” said Alan Kiyohara, vice president, Pharmacy Operations and Services for Kaiser Permanente Southern California. “Events like this address crucial public safety and public health concerns. They also provide health care providers and law enforcement with ways to raise awareness about the benefits of properly storing and disposing of prescription medications, and ultimately help reduce the number of people who misuse, abuse or overdose from these powerful drugs.”

Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015, more than 15,000 people died from overdoses involving prescription opioids. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends—often from home medicine cabinets.

“This program has been a tremendous success,” said Jane Ryang, PharmD, area pharmacy director, Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center Area. “In 2016, Kaiser Permanente facilities in California, Oregon and Colorado collected approximately 15,000 pounds of expired or unwanted medicines. By properly disposing of prescription drugs, we reduce the risk of abuse, accidental poisonings and environmental damage posed by such medications, especially controlled prescription drugs such as painkillers, tranquilizers and stimulants.”

Adding to Kaiser Permanente’s efforts to promote safety, drug disposal kiosks have been installed in two Southern California pharmacies as part of a pilot project aimed at reducing the risks posed by unwanted and expired medications.

The kiosks — located in the Kaiser Permanente East Los Angeles Medical Office and the Kaiser Permanente Normandie North Medical Office (Harbor City, CA) — are available for public use during
regular pharmacy hours. Collected drugs are disposed of according to federal, state and local regulations. Kaiser Permanente personnel monitor the kiosks and keep records of collections. The actual disposal is managed by a registered pharmaceutical waste handler in an environmentally safe manner. Additional drug collection kiosks will be installed by the end of May at several other Kaiser Permanente Southern California facilities.

About Kaiser Permanente
Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 11.3 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health. For more information, go to: kp.org/share.

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