EXCELA HEALTH PROMOTING SAFE DISPOSAL OF UNUSED MEDICATIONS

LATROBE, PA, April 25, 2018 … When medicines are no longer needed, they should be disposed of promptly. Excela Health at its Latrobe Hospital campus is assisting the community with this effort as a registered collector for the federal Drug Enforcement Administration. The health system has installed a MedSafe receptacle in a publically accessible corridor of the hospital's ground floor, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the safe disposal of unused and expired medication. Acceptable items for disposal include pills, tablets, capsules, ointments, creams, lotions, powers, and liquid medicines of no more than 4 ounces.

The installation is in conjunction with the April 28 National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, and provides greater opportunity for the community to dispose of unneeded medications safely beyond a single day. The secure dropbox is under constant surveillance and emptied periodically by authorized health system personnel for processing of its contents. Based on the public response at this location, the health system hopes to install similar receptacles at both the Westmoreland and Frick Hospital campuses.

According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.4 million Americans abused controlled prescription drugs. The study shows that a majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet. MedSafe collection boxes, coupled with the DEA’s National Prescription Take Back Day provide an opportunity for Americans to prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths.
“Consumers and caregivers should remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from their home as quickly as possible to help reduce the chance that others accidentally take or intentionally misuse the unneeded medicine,” said Dean Matanin, Excela Health Director of Pharmacy. “Excela Health is helping to address a crucial public safety and public health issue.”

Unused or expired prescription medications are a public safety issue, leading to accidental poisoning, overdose, and abuse. Pharmaceutical drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs when taken without a prescription or a doctor’s supervision.

The non-medical use of prescription drugs ranks second only to marijuana as the most common form of drug abuse in America. The majority of teenagers abusing prescription drugs get them from family and friends —and the home medicine cabinet.

Unused prescription drugs thrown in the trash can be retrieved and abused or illegally sold. Unused drugs that are flushed contaminate the water supply. “Proper disposal of unused drugs saves lives and protects the environment,” added Matanin.