

Walgreens Expands Medication Disposal To 1,500 Stores In Opioid Battle

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Walgreens photo

Walgreens Boots Alliance will expand by 900 the number of safe medication disposal kiosks across the country, the nation's largest drugstore chain said.

Walgreens Boots Alliance will expand the number of safe medication disposal kiosks across the country to 1,500 stores, specifically targeting locations near “military bases and other areas where the opioid epidemic has challenged communities,” the [nation's largest drugstore chain said Wednesday](#).

Walgreens is the latest healthcare company to step up efforts to combat the abuse and misuse of the overprescribed painkillers. Already, Walgreens rival CVS Health and several health insurance companies including Anthem, Cigna and UnitedHealth Group have increased restrictions to reduce the number of opioid prescriptions.

While the insurers and pharmacy benefit managers attack the opioid epidemic by analyzing claims and educating physician prescribers to make sure Americans are getting their medications in the right place, in the right amount and at the right time, [Walgreens and its partners are working on a safe and effective medication supply chain](#) .

[Walgreens will add 900 additional kiosks over 10 months to its existing 600 safe medication disposal sites](#) . The effort is designed to “make it easier for people to dispose of their unwanted medications,” Walgreens president Alex Gourlay said.

Walgreens is working with drug wholesaler AmerisourceBergen, Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, drug maker Pfizer and Prime Therapeutics, a pharmacy benefit manager owned by Blue Cross plans, which are helping sponsor the safe medication initiative.

[Walgreens' goal is to collect an additional 300 tons of “unwanted medications” in the next two years](#) . Already, [Walgreens 600 safe medication disposal kiosks have collected 155 tons of unwanted medications in the first year and a half of the program.](#)

[The Forbes eBook On Obamacare](#)

[Inside Obamacare: The Fix For America’s Ailing Health Care System](#) explores the ways the Affordable Care Act will impact your health care.

Healthcare companies are beginning to tout some success in attacking opioid abuse.

For example, Anthem, which operates Blue Cross Blue Shield plans in 14 states, said in August it reached a company goal of reducing “prescribed opioids” filled at pharmacies by 30% during the last five years. That’s more than a year ahead of a goal the company set to achieve in 2019. In particular, Anthem said several of its Medicaid plans that provide health benefits to poor Americans have seen reductions in opioid prescriptions by between 9% and 29% in the last year alone.

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