

## BeMedWise Communications Toolkit for Talk About Your Medicines Month

Our 2018 Theme: **Taking Action to Prevent Opioid Misuse and Abuse**

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### Working Together to Increase Understanding About Opioids Safe Use

October marks BeMedWise's 33<sup>rd</sup> [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#). TAYMM is an annual opportunity to focus attention on the value that better medicine communication can play in promoting better medicine use and better health outcomes. For more than three decades, TAYMM has grown and expanded to stimulate conversations between consumers and their healthcare providers about all the types of medicines they may take, with a focus on what to know and what to do in terms of expected health outcomes, side effects, benefits and potential risks.

The facts are chilling: from 1999 - 2016, more than 350,000 people died from an overdose involving opioids. This year, BeMedWise and our health education stakeholders are **taking action to prevent opioid misuse and abuse** by informing patients, their families, caregivers, and others how to manage these serious medications, keep them out of reach from children, family and visitors and then dispose of unused opioids correctly so they don't get into the wrong hands or damage the environment.

The objective of any communication between patients and their healthcare providers is to improve the patient's health and medical care. Good communication is at the heart of good medicine. [Data](#) show that patients reporting good communication with their healthcare providers are more likely to be satisfied with their care, follow advice and adhere to the prescribed treatment. Consumers need to be aware of the questions to ask, and healthcare providers in turn must be able to share medical information in a meaningful way that their patients are able to understand and act on.

Whether you are a consumer health organization, medical society or clinical organization, we encourage you to use this **Talk About Your Medicines Month communications toolkit** to educate and help encourage safe medicine use conversations. The toolkit includes a news article, social media messages and accompanying graphics to customize and share to educate your own members, constituents and audiences about TAYMM. **One of the graphics is an invitation to join our kick-off TAYMM webinar on October 4, 2018 hosted by [NeedyMeds](#).**

We hope you can use these resources in your own communication channels throughout **Talk About Your Medicines Month** this October and beyond. Please visit the **new [Talk About Your Medicines website](#)** and [www.BeMedWise.org](http://www.BeMedWise.org) for additional information and resources including tips on planning an event in your community. Please send me an email at [deborah.davidson@needymeds.org](mailto:deborah.davidson@needymeds.org) if you were able to share TAYMM information with your members and stakeholder networks – I would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your engagement!

Deborah

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## Communications Toolkit:

### Talk About Your Medicines month: Taking Action to Prevent Opioid Misuse and Abuse

**“What are Opioids? “Article” for your e-newsletter, blog, etc.:**

October marks the 33<sup>rd</sup> [Talk About Your Medicines Month](#), an annual opportunity to focus attention on the value that enhanced provider-patient communication about medicines can play in promoting safe and appropriate medicine use and improved health outcomes. Of course, communication is a two-way street. Consumers benefit from being proactive in asking questions and seeking information about their medicines; and healthcare providers in turn must be able to share medical information in a meaningful way that their patients are able to understand and act on. Visit the [new Talk About Your Medicines website](#) to access tips, fact sheets and other resources for patients, healthcare providers and caregivers, to stimulate conversations focused on **Talk About Your Medicines Month’s theme: Taking action to prevent opioid misuse and abuse**

#### **What are Opioids?**

Opioids are a class of drugs used to reduce pain.

**Prescription opioids** can be used to treat moderate-to-severe pain and are often prescribed following surgery, injury, or for health conditions such as cancer pain. In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the acceptance and use of prescription opioids for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain, such as back pain or osteoarthritis, despite serious risks and the lack of evidence about their long-term effectiveness. (Ref: [CDC](#))

Providers wrote nearly a quarter of a billion opioid prescriptions in 2013 - with wide variation across states. This is enough for every American adult to have their own bottle of pills. Studies suggest that regional variation in use of prescription opioids cannot be explained by the underlying health status of the population.

The most common drugs involved in prescription opioid overdose deaths include:

- Methadone
- Oxycodone (such as OxyContin®)
- Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin®)

**Fentanyl** is a synthetic opioid pain reliever. It is many times more powerful than other opioids and is approved for treating severe pain, typically advanced cancer pain. Illegally made and distributed fentanyl has been on the rise in several states. (Ref: [CDC](#)). The rate of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids other than methadone, which includes fentanyl, doubled from 2015 to 2016. Roughly 19,400 people died from overdoses involving synthetic opioids other than methadone in 2016. (Ref: [CDC](#))

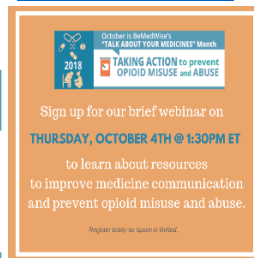
**Heroin** is an illegal opioid. Heroin use has increased across the U.S. among men and women, most age groups, and all income levels. Some of the greatest increases occurred in demographic groups with historically low rates of heroin use: women, the privately insured, and people with higher incomes. From 2010 – 2016, heroin-related deaths increased by more than **five times**. (Ref: [CDC](#))

**Article Cont.**

Not only are people using heroin, they are also abusing multiple other substances, especially cocaine and prescription opioid pain relievers. Nearly all people who use heroin also use at least one other drug.

**Graphics to share**

**Oct. 4 - Webinar**



***Suggested social media posts, to customize for your members & audiences:***

Help Educate & Share Via Social Media: TAYMM: Taking Action to Prevent Opioid Misuse and Abuse	
<p>Facebook: <b>General Audience</b></p>	<p><b>Safe Disposal: An Important Part of Addressing Opioid Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow disposal directions you received with your medicines. If you did not receive directions, ask your pharmacist about disposal or consult the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines.</li> <li>Take advantage of programs that accept unused medications for proper disposal. Find the disposal location in your area by visiting <a href="http://www.AgainstOpioidAbuse.org/disposal">www.AgainstOpioidAbuse.org/disposal</a>.</li> <li>The FDA recommends folding fentanyl patches in half with the sticky sides together before flushing.</li> <li>Scratch out all personal information on prescription containers before discarding.</li> <li>Ask your physician's office or pharmacist if they provide medication disposal bags (these bags neutralize medicines to avoid damage to the environment).</li> <li>You can also combine medication with dirt, kitty litter or used coffee grounds and place the mixture in a sealed plastic bag before discarding in the trash. <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a></li> </ul> <p>[Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Facebook: <b>HCP Audience</b></p>	<p><b>Good Communication is at the Heart of Good Medicine</b></p> <p>October is Talk About Your Medicines Month. Many patients and caregivers are not aware of any safety warnings about their opioid medicines. Make sure your patients are well informed about the medicines they take, and drug interactions/side effects they should be on the lookout for – and avoid. Provide your patients with tips on safe storage and disposal methods. They can learn more about safe opioid use here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> [Share jpeg image]</p>

<p>Facebook: <b>HCP Audience</b></p>	<p><b>Medication Safety Begins with Education</b> Many patients and caregivers are not aware of any safety warnings about their opioid medications. Regularly review all medications your patients are taking so they know what to look for and avoid potentially harmful drug interactions. October is Talk About Your Medicines Month. Make sure your patients are well informed about the opioid medicines they take, and drug interactions/side effects they should be on the lookout for including avoiding alcohol use. Provide your patients with tips on safe storage and disposal methods. They can learn more about the important topic of opioid safe use here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> [Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Facebook: <b>Consumer Education</b></p>	<p><b>October is Talk About Your Medicines Month.</b> <u>Make the most informed decision with your doctor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with your doctor - create a plan on how to manage your pain to make sure you are getting the safest, most effective pain management possible.</li> <li>• Discuss possible ways to manage your pain without opioids.</li> <li>• If it is determined that opioids are the best course of action, talk to your doctor about any and all side effects and concerns.</li> <li>• Carefully read the labels of all over-the-counter and prescription medicines you take and pay attention to any warnings on the labels.</li> <li>• Never take opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed. Never sell or share prescription opioids. It's illegal <u>and</u> dangerous.</li> <li>• Store prescription opioids in a secure place, out of reach of others (including children, family, friends, and visitors). Visit <a href="#">Up and Away</a> to learn more.</li> <li>• Keep an up-to-date medication list and review all of the medications you are taking with your doctor at each visit. Be sure a family member, caregiver or close friend has a copy of the list.</li> <li>• Opioids and alcohol DO NOT ever mix</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> [Share jpeg image]</p>
<p>Twitter: <b>Post with graphic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out how parents, grandparents, teens, young adults and community leaders are taking action to prevent opioid abuse here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM [upload jpeg image]</li> <li>• An average of 115 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose – Learn about safe opioid use here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM</li> <li>• If you or a loved one are prescribed an opioid medication, talk to your doctor or provider about how many days you should take them, what are the side effects and potential risks and if there are other medications that you should stop taking during this time. Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM</li> <li>• Taking an opioid medicine? Ask your doctor or provider how you should store this medicine, and how to safely dispose of unused medicines. Learn more here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM</li> <li>• According to the FDA—When taking opioids NEVER mix them with alcohol, antihistamines, barbiturates, or benzodiazepines. These substances will slow your breathing &amp; their combined side effects could lead to life-threatening respiratory depression. Learn more about using opioids safely: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM</li> <li>• Each day, more than 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for not using opioid prescriptions as directed. Always read the label and ask your provider any questions you have. Learn more here: <a href="http://bit.ly/TAYM2018">http://bit.ly/TAYM2018</a> #TAYMM</li> </ul>