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**National Patient Safety Awareness Week Highlights the Hidden Dangers of Prescription Drug Misuse in South Carolina**

*How Safe Storage and Disposal Can Save Lives in South Carolina*

**Columbia, SC – March 10, 2025** – As [National Patient Safety Awareness Week](#) commences, the South Carolina [Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services](#) (DAODAS) is drawing attention to the critical issue of prescription drug misuse, a growing concern that poses significant risks to patient safety across the state. Each year, nearly 5 million opioid prescriptions are filled in South Carolina, increasing the risk of addiction, overdose, and preventable harm.

**The Scope of the Problem**

In South Carolina, the misuse of prescription medications, particularly opioids, has reached alarming levels. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)), recent [data](#) reveal that approximately 3.3% of residents age 12 and older reported misusing prescription pain relievers in the past year. This misuse contributes to a broader substance use disorder prevalence of 14.7% among individuals age 12 or older in the state.

The consequences of this misuse are starkly reflected in overdose statistics. In 2022, South Carolina experienced [2,296 drug overdose deaths](#), with 1,864 (approximately 81%) involving opioids.

**The Importance of Safe Storage and Disposal**

To combat the escalating crisis, DAODAS emphasizes the critical role of safe medication storage and disposal. Proper practices can prevent unauthorized access to prescription drugs, thereby reducing the risk of misuse and potential overdose. Patients are encouraged to:

- **Store medications securely:** Keep prescription drugs in locked cabinets or other secure locations inaccessible to others, especially children and teenagers.
- **Dispose of medications responsibly:** Utilize designated drug take-back programs or authorized [collection sites](#) to dispose of unused or expired medications safely.

**DAODAS Initiatives and Resources**

DAODAS is committed to enhancing public awareness and providing resources to address prescription drug misuse:

- **Public Education Campaigns:** Initiatives like "[Just Plain Killers](#)" aim to inform the public about the dangers of opioid misuse and promote preventive measures.

- **Treatment and Support Services:** Accessible [treatment options](#) and support networks are available for individuals struggling with substance use disorders.
- **Collaboration with Healthcare Providers:** DAODAS works closely with medical professionals to promote safe prescribing practices and patient education.

### **Take Action for Patient Safety**

As we recognize Patient Safety Awareness Week, DAODAS urges all South Carolinians to take proactive steps in ensuring the safe use, storage, and disposal of medications.

Through collective efforts, we can safeguard our communities and promote a healthier, safer future.

**For more information or to access resources, please visit [www.daodas.sc.gov](http://www.daodas.sc.gov) or contact DAODAS at (803) 896-5555.**

### **About DAODAS:**

The Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) is the South Carolina government agency charged with ensuring quality services to prevent or reduce the negative consequences of substance use and addictions through a statewide system of local organizations that provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services. For more information, visit [www.daodas.sc.gov](http://www.daodas.sc.gov).