

# MEDICATION TAKE BACK

## EVENT GUIDE

An organizational and planning resource  
for hosting a successful event



As of January 30, 2018

Disclaimer: This document is not intended to take place of local, state or federal laws or guidelines. This is a general guide to assist in the planning and management of an event. Although the information contained in this publication has been researched and presented with care and attention, we are not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of this information. Information in this guide is subject to change at any time. Use of this guide does not create nor establish any contractual or other relationship with Michigan OPEN, the University of Michigan, or its Board of Regents.

**For up to date and further  
information, refer to:**

[http://michigan-open.org/  
safe-drug-disposal/organizing-  
an-opioid-take-back-event/](http://michigan-open.org/safe-drug-disposal/organizing-an-opioid-take-back-event/)

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## Introduction

### History of the Opioid Epidemic

The United States is currently experiencing an epidemic of prescription drug misuse and abuse. 12.5 million people age 12 and older misused opioids (pain medications) in the past year. Since 1999, overdose deaths involving prescription opioids have quadrupled. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 134 Americans die every day from an opioid-related overdose – that is more than the number of people killed in car accidents or by guns.

Opioids are a broad group of medications that relieve pain by affecting how your brain and central nervous system process pain and are often prescribed during acute care episodes (such as after a surgery, or dental procedure). A recent study (Hill, et al. *Annals of Surgery*, September, 2016) found that approximately 70% of the opioids prescribed for surgery go unused, making them vulnerable to diversion and misuse.

### Why Should I Host a Take Back Event?

Prevention is key. To turn the tide of the opioid epidemic, we need to prevent opioid abuse before it begins. Increasing safe and easy opportunities for community members to dispose of their unused and leftover medications is essential. Approved opioid collectors, such as pharmacies and law enforcement (LE) agencies, and special take back events are the safest and most environmentally-friendly means of disposing unneeded medications.

Take back events are a great opportunity for community organizations and individuals to come together to make a difference in their local community. These events provide an opportunity to educate the public on safe storage and disposal of prescription medications.

### About the Medication Take Back Event Guide

This Take Back Event Guide has been designed to assist you and your community partners in successfully organizing and running a take back event.

While this guide highlights many key issues to consider when organizing your event, it is just a recommendation. Many communities have successfully adapted these recommendations to fit their location, event size, and law enforcement partner accordingly.

Michigan OPEN is available as a resource to advise on the planning and implementation processes. It remains, however, the event organizer's responsibility to seek additional information where required and to ensure that all approvals have been obtained.

## 1.0 Getting Started

**Michigan OPEN is available as a resource to advise on the following:**

- How to obtain law enforcement partnership for the event
- Ideas for promoting the event in your community (templates available upon request)
- Volunteer recruitment ideas
- General questions and troubleshooting

**We encourage seeking additional partnerships within your organization. Suggestions include:**

- Marketing department
- Community Relations department
- Leadership of your organization

**Michigan OPEN contact information:** [MichiganOPEN@umich.edu](mailto:MichiganOPEN@umich.edu)

## 2.0 Identifying Your Team

A strong team and group of partners will ensure a successful event.

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### 2.1 Event Organizer

A well-managed and safe event requires careful planning. It is critical to appoint a lead event organizer for your take back event. The organizer will be responsible for organizing, managing, and directing the event process. Given the complexity of this role, it is helpful to maintain detailed records of each of these steps. (see 8.1 Event Organizer Clipboard)

#### Event Organizer Responsibilities:

- Review and familiarize yourself with this guide
- Review, determine, and manage the budget specific to your event size
- Connect with law enforcement, and other organizations for partnerships
- Recruit volunteers and delegate tasks from the Volunteer Task List (section 8.1)
- Determine and distribute promotional and educational materials within the community

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### 2.2 Volunteers

Volunteers are key to running a successful event. If you need additional volunteers, consider reaching out to local medical, pharmacy, or nursing students. Michigan OPEN has created the [Volunteer Guide](#) to give to your volunteers.

#### Volunteers are needed to:

- Distribute fliers and help advertise in advance of the event
- Set up and clean up on the day of the event
- Run the medication take back workstations on the day of the event (approx. 1-2 per workstation)
- Direct traffic, greet participants, answer questions, etc.

**NOTE:** it is important to educate volunteers on guidelines and laws pertaining to the event.

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### 2.3 Law Enforcement (LE)

To host a take back event, you will need to identify a LE partner. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) requires **minimally, one LE officer, unless the event uses a permanent disposal box location.** Michigan OPEN strongly recommends the presence of *at least two* officers at your take back event, especially for larger events.

**NOTE:** Payment for LE coverage should be discussed when identifying LE partner.

## 3.0 Event Work Flow

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### 3.1 Purpose

The take back event's purpose is twofold: remove unused medications from the community and educate the public about safe storage and disposal.

**NOTE:**

- The Michigan OPEN [website](#) has free, downloadable educational materials available for widespread use.
  - The hosting community may have information on established year-round disposal sites that can also be distributed.
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### 3.2 Questionnaire

Michigan OPEN recommends creating a short questionnaire to be completed by event participants. The completed questionnaires will provide valuable information about the effectiveness of your event. The questionnaires are anonymous, and can be filled out with assistance from volunteers at the workstations. Refer to Michigan OPEN's sample questionnaire as a guide.

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### 3.3 Medication Collection

The event organizer, in collaboration with the established LE partner, will determine the preferred process for collection of medications of interest.

**Michigan OPEN supports two options:**

- estimating number of pills (preferred method)
- counting the number of pills (requires a few additional items noted in the supplies list & additional volunteers per workstation to maintain efficiency)

**NOTE:** The [Volunteer Guide](#) illustrates the two options in more detail.

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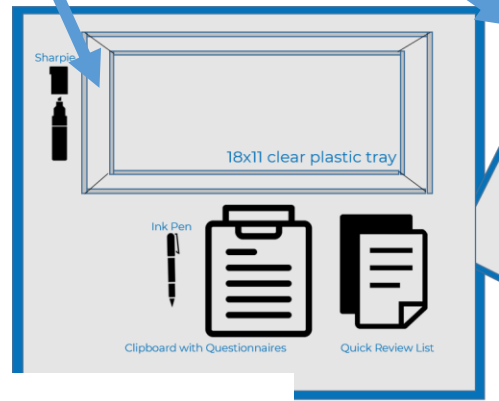
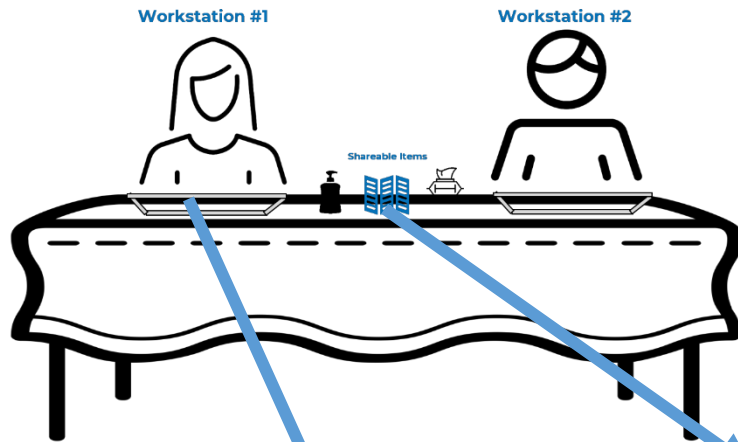
### 3.4 Workstation Setup

Workstations are where the bulk of volunteers are needed. The number of workstations you will need will depend on the anticipated size of the event. Typically, 1-2 volunteers are needed at each workstation.

The [Workstation Packet](#) includes: medication of interest list and accepted items. Each workstation should have 1 packet with extras available if needed.

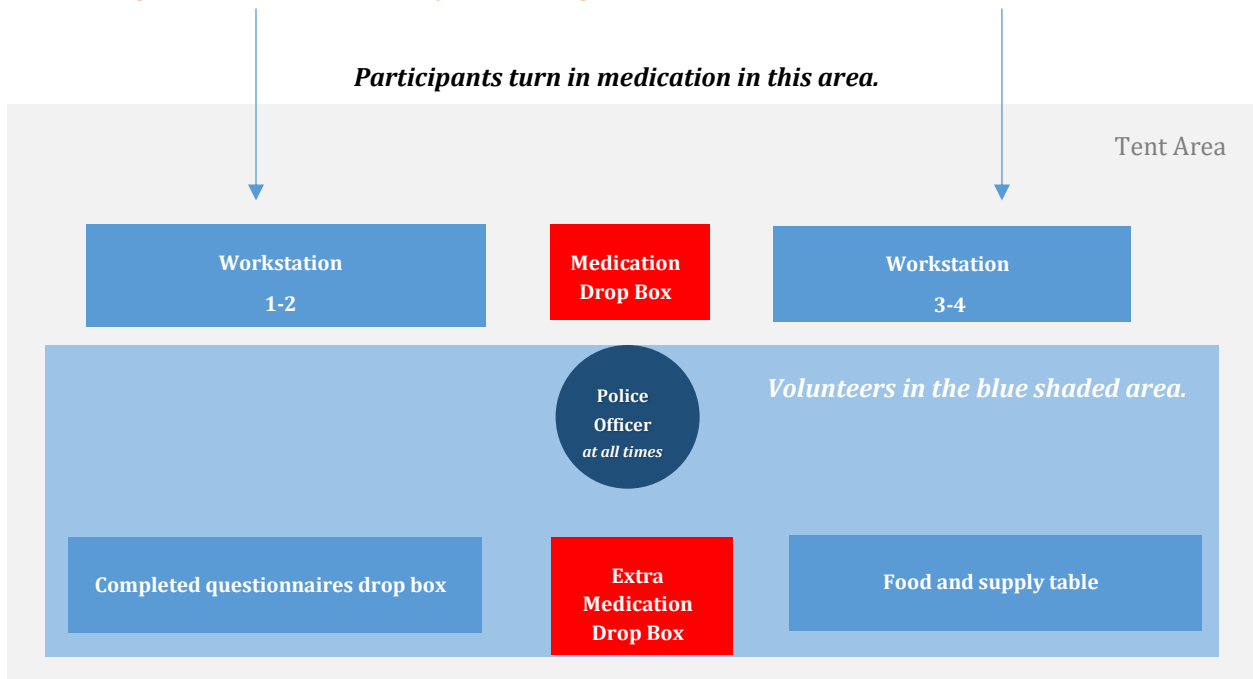
On the following page is an example workstation diagram:

### EXAMPLE WORKSTATION DIAGRAM



EXAMPLE TENT SETUP

*Cones around perimeter to block vehicles from entering the area.*



## 4.0 Supplies List

This supplies list contains some optional items. Check your office, home, or the venue for these items before purchasing. Pricing estimates provided in Section 7.0-Budget.

### General Supplies:

- Scissors (for set-up/tear-down of event)
- Clear shipping/heavy-duty packing tape (to secure tablecloths)
- Zip ties/rope (for tying banners - optional)
- Trash receptacle bins and liners
- Medication disposal box and lid w/ hole- Coordinate with LE on type of box required
- Hazardous waste box liners for medication disposal box

### Workstation Setup:

- Plastic table cloths
- Clipboards (for participant questionnaires + 1 for event organizer)
- Ink pens (for filling out questionnaires)
- King size black permanent markers (for participants to mark off personal info.)
- 18x11 clear plastic platter trays (for placing pill bottles if *counting*; if estimating may use smaller trays)
- Hand sanitizer
- Quart-sized Ziploc-style bags (some participants wish to keep their pill bottles)
- Disinfectant wipes (for wiping down trays)
- Tongue depressors (*optional* – only if *counting* medications)



- Box of disposable gloves (for safety reasons)
- Paper towels
- Stapler

**Rental Supplies:**

- tent with canopy sides (*optional* - if held outside)
- Folding chairs (1 for each workstation)
- 1 Banquet table per 2 workstations
- 1 additional Banquet table for shared supplies

**Optional:**

- Container for completed questionnaires
- Book ring for each [Workstation Packet](#)
- Laminating pouch/sleeves for [Workstation Packet](#) pages
- Balloons
- Volunteer apparel (coordinating t-shirts, pins, nametags, or hats to differentiate the volunteers)
- Assorted candy & candy bowl for participants
- Food for volunteers
  - Ex: Donuts, coffee, bottled water (morning setup)
  - Ex: Pizza and soda (lunch)

## 5.0 The Venue

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### 5.1 Choice of Location

In collaboration with your LE partner, determine a suitable venue to meet the following criteria:

- Easy entrances and exits for participants to access and participate in the event safely
- Well known location in the community  
**NOTE:** Think long-term. Using the same location for each subsequent event will increase participation over time.
- Visibility  
**NOTE:** A site near/in a location that receives a lot of foot or car traffic helps with publicity and getting additional advertising for your event.
- Space to set up a tent, if holding the event outdoors  
**NOTE:** The potential impact of weather should be considered if hosting outside.
- Sufficient parking and/or accessible by public transportation
- Safe perimeter around the event  
**NOTE:** Law enforcement officers must be able to easily secure and control the site for safety. If the event is in a busy area, be sure it is clearly separate from other events, e.g. using cones, barricades, or rope.
- Access to restrooms

#### Examples of locations:

- Parking lots of a church, mall, retail center, pharmacy, or school
- Community parks, e.g. a pavilion area or parking lot
- Household hazardous waste disposal facilities
- Police or fire department parking lots

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### 5.2 Things to Consider

Consider additional features of the venue, specific to volunteering, such as:

- Volunteer parking
- Restrooms
- Food and beverage locations
- Banners, yard signs & balloons setup

## 6.0 Event Promotion

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### 6.1 Promotional Ideas

It takes advanced planning to successfully promote a take back event. Look around your community for ways to promote your event. Suggestions include:

- Calendars located on newspaper and community websites
- Radio spots/mentions
- Newspaper stories or ads
- Places of worship newsletters
- Fliers – Michigan OPEN has flier templates available upon request
- E-mail blasts
  - Contact the superintendent or principal of each local school district requesting email blasts to parents/guardians
  - Contact state, county, and local law enforcement agencies to request advertising through their Nixle ([www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com)) or community email blast accounts
  - Neighborhood email lists
- Social media – Michigan OPEN has templates available upon request for Facebook or Twitter posts. These can be used by marketing and communication departments of potential partners, below.

### 6.2 Potential Partners

Consider reaching out to the following community organizations to ask if their marketing department would consider promoting your event.

- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • City and community leadership       | • Non-profit organizations |
| • Local businesses                    | • Environmental groups     |
| • Healthcare clinics                  | • Universities or colleges |
| • Private and public school districts | • Religious organizations  |
| • Hospices                            | • Pharmacies               |
| • Dentist offices                     | • Libraries                |

### 6.3 Banners/Signage

Having clear and strategically placed signage on the day of the event will help with promotion, as well as coordinating traffic and parking. We recommend documenting location of all signage to ensure it is all collected at the end of the event.

- Michigan OPEN has templates for creating event signage, including banners and yard signs.
- Some communities may require approval of banners, yard signs, etc. *Please be sure to check your community's regulations/restrictions.*

We recommend placing at least one banner in front of the tent/high traffic area and yard signs at event entrances.

## 7.0 Budget

Take back events are a service to your community. Organizations in your community may be willing to assist with costs associated with hosting an event. Many of these costs are optional and modifiable to fit the size of your event.

### Sample Budget

General Supplies				
Item	Comments	Qty	Cost	Total
<b>Set-up and Tear-down</b>				
Scissors		1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
heavy duty shipping tape w/dispenser		2	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00
zip ties/bundling straps or rope		1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
medication disposal box (can use others for trash & recycle if needed)	<i>ULINE #S-11855B/sold in quantities of 10, as priced. LE may have other options available.</i>	1	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00
lid for medication disposal box	<i>ULINE #S-13937/sold in quantities of 10</i>	1	\$ 23.00	\$ 23.00
trash liners	<i>Can use 40 lb. trash liners or order - ULINE #S-12986R/sold in quantities of 64. Affordable option is regular trash liners. Discuss w/law enforcement</i>	1	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total General Supplies</b>				<b>\$ 113.00</b>

Workstation Setup- for one table with 2 workstations				
Item	Comments	Qty	Cost	Total
plastic table cover		1	\$ 2.00	\$ 2.00
stapler		1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
clipboard	<i>additional clipboard for the Event Org.</i>	3	\$ 6.00	\$ 18.00
ink pens		2	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00
king size black permanent marker		2	\$ 6.00	\$ 12.00
18x11 clear plastic tray	<i>Party City SKU 257440</i>	2	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00
hand sanitizer		1	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00
Ziploc style baggies		1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
disinfecting wipes		1	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.00
tongue depressors	<i>used if counting medications</i>	1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
disposable gloves		1	\$ 6.00	\$ 6.00
paper towels		1	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.50
<b>Total Workstation Setup</b>				<b>\$ 76.50</b>

## Sample Budget (cont'd)

Promotional Expenses				
Item	Comments	Qty	Cost	Total
Printing of questionnaire and educational information. Pricing varies.				\$ 300.00
Banner	6x9 w/grommets	1	\$ 55.00	\$ 55.00
Yard sign and metal frame	24x36	1	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00
<b>Total Promotional Expenses</b>				<b>\$ 395.00</b>

Rental Supplies (may be optional depending on venue)				
Item	Comments	Qty	Cost	Total
6 ft. banquet table	1 table for 2 workstations	1	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00
6 ft. banquet table	table for supplies	1	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00
folding chairs	1 per volunteer, estimated 7	7	\$ 1.50	\$ 10.50
tent w/canopy sides	10x15 framed canopy tent w/sides and set-up fees	1	\$300.00	\$ 300.00
<b>Total Rental Supplies</b>				<b>\$ 326.50</b>

Optional				
Item	Comments	Qty	Cost	Total
Balloons	bring attention to the event	12	\$ 1.00	\$ 12.00
small plastic bin	for completed questionnaires	1	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
loose leaf book rings	to hold <u>Workstation Packets</u> together	1 box	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00
laminating sleeves	for <u>Workstation Packets</u>	1 box	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00
volunteer T-shirts	approx. cost for 7 volunteers			\$ 125.00
donuts and coffee				\$ 35.00
water				\$ 8.00
pizza plus drinks				\$ 45.00
assorted candy & candy bowl	for participants			\$ 10.00
<b>Total Optional</b>				<b>\$ 263.00</b>

## 8.0 Event Organizer Clipboard

The Event Organizer should have all important documentation readily accessible on day of the event. This might include:

- List of volunteers, including their cell numbers and hours they are working
- Contact information for rental company (e.g., tent etc)
- Copies of all contracts
- Signed law enforcement policy
- All receipts for reimbursement if applicable
- All Checklists (section 8.0)

### 8.1 Volunteer Task List

The Event Organizer can use this Volunteer Task List to delegate all, or some, of the items to volunteers.

**NOTE:** Keep all receipts for reimbursement, if applicable; prepay whenever possible for ease to volunteer.

Task	Assigned to...
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Food items to order:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order &amp; pick up breakfast items – <i>optional</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Donuts or bagels, coffee, sweetener, creamer, cups &amp; napkins</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hot cider and/or hot chocolate (in the fall)</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order, pick up, or have lunch delivered - <i>optional</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pizza, sandwiches, etc. for all volunteers</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchase &amp; pick up beverages - <i>optional</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ice, water, and cooler</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchase candy for participants- <i>optional</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bring candy &amp; candy bowl</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Balloons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order &amp; pick up approximately 1-2 dozen balloons</li> </ul> <p>Total number can vary according to # of signs, location of event, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Day of event, strategically tie balloons to attract attention to event.</li> </ul> <p>Suggest tying a few to the tent and to yard signs at the entrance or on the road.</p>	<p>_____</p>

Task	Assigned to...
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Volunteer apparel</b></p> <p>Volunteers must be easily identified apart from participants. T-shirts are one suggestion. Other options include hats, pins, nametags, shirts in a coordinated color.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm # of volunteers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collect t-shirt sizes <i>optional</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order t-shirts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distribute t-shirts either the day of the event, or in pre-event meeting(s).</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Items to copy &amp; laminate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Workstation Packets</u> – one per workstation with a few extras</li> </ul> <p><i>includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick review/overview of what to do; accepted/not accepted medications; workstation diagram (2 pgs.)</li> <li>• Medications of Interest list (1 pg.)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire (1 pg.) – 1 per participant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <u>Volunteer guide</u> – email or print &amp; distribute to all volunteers (2 pgs.)</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Create/print handouts to distribute at the event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Educational brochures on safe storage &amp; disposal of opioids <a href="http://michigan-open.org/patient-resources/">http://michigan-open.org/patient-resources/</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any local information or partnering organization's information for public distribution.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a 2—sided, ¼ sheet educational handout - <i>optional</i> <i>Side 1 – Your contact information</i> <i>Side 2 – Local community year-round drop-off locations</i></li> </ul>	<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assign volunteers to distribute fliers the week or two leading up to the event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location 1 – _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location 2 – _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location 3 – _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Location 4 – _____</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Task	Assigned to...
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Banners, yard signs, table poster</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain LE &amp; other partners' logos</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm number of banners; order; pick up or have delivered</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm number of yard signs; order; pick up or have delivered</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm number of table posters; order; pick up or have delivered - <i>optional</i></li> </ul>	_____

## 9.0 Event Planning Checklists

This section outlines the checklists for pre-event, event day and post event.

### 9.1 Pre- Event Checklist

#### 2 Months Before Event

- Identify an event organizer
- Establish and confirm law enforcement partnership
- Review guide and budget
- Devise promotional plan and set into motion
- Recruit volunteers
- Begin reviewing and delegating tasks from the Volunteer Task List
- Purchase supplies from Supplies List
- Order rental furnishings if needed
- If ordering volunteer apparel, connect with vendor for ordering timeline

#### 1 Month Before Event

- Revisit promotional plan and continue implementation
- Revisit Volunteer Task List and continue implementation
- Law enforcement obtains and weighs medication disposal bin(s)
- Create, order and print promotional materials, signage & all [Workstation Packets](#)
- Coordinate and prepare for volunteer meeting
- Send reminder email to volunteers confirming their availability



2-3 Weeks Before Event

- Increase promotional efforts
- Ensure all supplies were delivered
- Check rental agreements if applicable

1 Week Before Event

- Host volunteer meeting and distribute apparel; review what to wear
- Finalize Volunteer Task List
- Organize event organizer clipboard

9.2 Event Checklist

Event Day

2-3 hours prior

- Rental company delivers and sets up equipment, if applicable (e.g., tent, tables, chairs)
- Review Volunteer Task List verifying all items are at the venue
- Distribute volunteer apparel (if applicable)
- Set up workstations (review [Workstation Packet](#))
  - Tape tablecloths to tables (if venue is outdoors)
  - Set out educational brochures on proper disposal and any local community fliers
- Strategically place yard signs at entrances and closest intersections
- Hang up banners – including one on tent if applicable

1-hour prior

- Host a short, informal briefing with volunteers regarding the process and not handling any medications. This should be led by both law enforcement and event organizer
- Final review of the Volunteer Task List

9.3 Post-Event Checklist

Post Event Checklist

- Law Enforcement weighs collected medications and provides amount to event organizer.
- Law Enforcement removes collected medications off event site to dispose of medications per their department/DEA protocols.
- Rental company disassembles tent, tables, etc. (if applicable)
- Remove all banners and signage – including one on tent if applicable

- Wash all items that came into contact with medications
- Sort through signs and posters, storing any reusable items for future events

### Closing Communications

- Debrief with your volunteers, organization and any sponsors on amounts collected and thanking them for their support.
- Evaluate your event's success in discussion with your volunteers. Michigan OPEN would appreciate any comments/suggestions on what went well and what was challenging. Please email to [MichiganOPEN@umich.edu](mailto:MichiganOPEN@umich.edu)