



# News Release

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## **Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett Visits Oxford, Maryland for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day**

Dover, Del., May 1, 2018 – On Saturday, April 28, 2018, Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett visited Oxford, MD to participate in [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#). Assistant to the Secretary Hazlett was joined by USDA Rural Development State Director Denise Lovelady to visit a Prescription Drug Take Back Day Booth run by the Talbot County Sheriff's Office. The USDA officials met with local leaders to discuss new USDA funding opportunities to help fight the opioid epidemic.

USDA Rural Development is working to create an environment for rural prosperity, from greater access to broadband connectivity and medical care to workforce training through distance learning. In this work, she is particularly passionate about helping families and community leaders touched by the opioid epidemic find hope and partnership in building a brighter future.

During her visit, Assistant to the Secretary Hazlett stated, “Combatting addiction and overdose deaths in rural America will take an all hands on deck effort. To protect your family and friends, I encourage everyone to regularly clean out your medicine cabinet and dispose of leftover prescriptions at a safe collection site. With this small action, each of us can take an important step forward in guarding our loved ones and the rural communities we love.”

Reflecting on the visit, State Director Lovelady stated, “USDA Rural Development continues to push the envelope in forming new partnerships to help equip rural leaders with the resources they need to fight addiction and combat the opioid epidemic in rural Maryland and Delaware.”

Assistant to the Secretary Hazlett learned about innovative efforts by Sheriff Joe Gamble and the Talbot Goes Purple initiative to raise awareness among community members about the devastating effects the opioid crisis is having within in communities across Talbot County. This innovative initiative is now using its powerful message to raise awareness in neighboring Maryland counties and across state lines into Sussex County, Delaware. Hazlett was also able to visit The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day booth run by the Talbot County Sheriff's Office that served as a safe collection & disposal site for unneeded prescription medications. Sheriff's deputies were on hand at the booth to educate community members and give away materials, such as pill safes or pill pods, to assist with the safe disposal of unneeded medication at home.

(More)

USDA is an important partner to rural communities addressing this national problem. The Department is investing in treatment facilities and services, e-Connectivity and telemedicine, and public education efforts. In addition to program investment, USDA is helping communities share information about best practices to address the crisis.

At the direction of President Trump, The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been keenly focused on addressing the opioid crisis in rural communities. So far, the Department has [convened regional roundtables](#) to hear firsthand accounts of the impact of the crisis and effective strategies for response in rural communities; [launched a webpage](#) on opioid misuse in rural America featuring resources for rural communities and individuals facing the crisis; and [prioritized investments in two key grant programs to address the crisis in rural places](#). For more information about these efforts, visit the USDA rural opioid misuse webpage at [www.usda.gov/opioids](http://www.usda.gov/opioids).

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