

Back Day. Take back days are nationwide efforts to remove old or unused prescription drugs from medicine cabinets so they don't fall into the wrong hands and lead to substance abuse and addiction. I am proud to have helped encourage take back days a few years ago by working with Senators KLOBUCHAR, CORNYN, and BROWN to pass the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health care providers wrote almost a quarter of a billion opioid prescriptions in 2013, enough for every American adult to have his or her own bottle of pills. The accumulation of these medicines in our homes creates a public health risk, since they can be accidentally ingested, abused, stolen, and passed on to others. According to the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.5 million Americans abused controlled prescription drugs that year. According to that same study, a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

Obviously, the consequences of this prescription drug abuse can be dangerous and even deadly. Prescription drug abuse may lead to abuse of other drugs like heroin, which is cheaper and more readily available. In 2014, more than 47,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States, an alltime high. Incredibly, more than half of those deaths involved prescription opioids or heroin.

So raising public awareness about the dangers of abuse and reducing the availability of unused medications are important components of preventing prescription drug abuse and addiction. The take back day initiative is a great way to make progress on both fronts.

Beginning in September 2010, the DEA has coordinated these days twice a year, with fantastic results. At the most recent event last September, Americans turned in 350 tons of prescription drugs at more than 5,000 sites operated by the DEA and more than 3,800 of its State and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 10 previous take back events, DEA and its partners have taken in more than 2,750 tons of pills. It is not an exaggeration to say that take back events have probably saved lives.

Now, for some unexplained reason, the Obama administration decided to discontinue this program a few years ago, but in May 2015, I was a member of a bipartisan group of Senators that wrote to the Department of Justice, urging that it be reinstated. A few months later, DEA Acting Administrator Rosenberg did so. I am grateful for that decision.

In fact, I support expanding take back opportunities, by creating additional permanent, convenient disposal sites for the public. Expansion of the program along these lines is explicitly authorized in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, a bill I guid-

ed through the Judiciary Committee in February. It subsequently passed the Senate by a vote of 94-1.

So I urge everyone in Iowa and across the country to check your homes for unneeded or expired medicines. If you find any, please take part in this year's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday. Participating locations typically include neighborhood pharmacies and local fire and police departments. You can locate a specific collection site near you on the DEA's website. This is one small way we can each do our part to reduce the risk of drug abuse and addiction for our families and communities.

DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I wish to raise awareness about Duchenne muscular dystrophy and the boys and young men who suffer from this devastating disease.

Duchenne muscular dystrophy was first brought to my attention 15 years ago, when I met Brian and Alice Denger of Biddeford, ME. The Dengers had two wonderful sons, Matthew and Patrick, who were both born with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Patrick, now 19, is a student at the University of New England. He recently received his driver's license and enjoys driving in Maine. His brother Matthew was a 20-year-old student at UNE when he died from the disease about 3 years ago. The Dengers also have a daughter, Rachel, with juvenile diabetes. They are a loving and courageous family whose strength and spirit directly inspired me to become involved in the fight for research funding to combat muscular dystrophy.

Brian Denger was the first to tell me of the terrible progression of this type of muscular dystrophy. Symptoms begin in early childhood, and boys quickly experience severe and rapidly progressing muscle degeneration, which often results in their losing the ability to walk. Tragically, most die prematurely as a result of muscle-related cardiac and respiratory problems.

In 2001, what really caught my attention was that the treatment options for boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy were incredibly limited and aimed at managing symptoms in an attempt to optimize quality of life for the limited time that these children would have to share with us. Research had not yielded any meaningful way to extend the lifespan of children suffering from the disease. That is why I joined with the late Senator Paul Wellstone in introducing the MD CARE Act, to raise awareness and expand Federal support for research into this debilitating disease. It was signed into law and last reauthorized in 2014 and has resulted in dramatically improved and standardized clinical care for those with the disease. I have also fought diligently for increased funding for the Duchenne programs at the National In-

stitutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Today there is some good news for the boys—and now—young men with Duchenne muscular dystrophy and their families. A number of therapeutic strategies are currently under development, and we have made dramatic progress to improve the quality and length of life for those who suffer from the disease. In fact, the average lifespan of Duchenne patients has increased by about a decade since the MD CARE Act became law.

Given our Nation's wealth of scientific expertise, however, we can and should do more for families like the Dengers. We are making progress, but this is no time to take our foot off the accelerator. The \$2 billion increase in funding for NIH that was included in the fiscal year 2016 funding bill will pay dividends for patients and their families. I urge my colleagues to continue to work collaboratively to sustain this commitment to biomedical research, which holds tremendous promise for finding better treatments and, ultimately, a cure for devastating diseases like Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

REMEMBERING JOHN HEINZ

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, on April 4, we marked 25 years since Pennsylvania Senator John Heinz died in a plane crash. I am honored to serve in the Senate seat he held from 1977 to 1991.

Five years ago, I paid tribute to Senator Heinz for his public service as a Senator. Today, I am going to focus on his leadership on the Special Committee on Aging. Senator Heinz served as chairman of that committee from 1981 to 1987. Pennsylvania is one of the oldest States in the country, and through this position, Senator Heinz was a strong advocate for seniors. During his chairmanship, the Special Committee on Aging held 34 hearings in Washington, DC, and countless more around the Nation. The committee also produced over 60 reports and papers. Senator Heinz would often use what he learned through these investigations and reports to inform his work as a member of the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Social Security and Medicare programs.

John Heinz once said, "Working together, we can lay the groundwork for a society that respects age and the elderly and that truly realizes the benefits of the experience, wisdom, and judgement of older Americans." As chairman of the Aging Committee, his first responsibility was not to party or partisanship, but to older Americans whose interests the committee was created to support and protect. Frank McArdle, a member of Senator Heinz's staff once commented:

What Heinz brought to many issues . . . was a sense of outrage. He could channel that anger toward public policy that would correct the injustices that hurt vulnerable populations. When he seized upon a situation