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**Optima Health and Verde Environmental Technologies Inc. launch new initiative to encourage safe medication disposal**

*At-home drug disposal pouches will soon be available to patients at more than 60 Sentara Medical Group offices in Virginia and North Carolina*

**MINNETONKA, Minn. and VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., July 14, 2022** – Optima Health, a health plan service of Sentara Healthcare, and [Verde Environmental Technologies Inc.](#), maker of the Deterra® Drug Deactivation and Disposal System, announced a new partnership to pilot the distribution of at-home drug deactivation and disposal pouches.

“This is the first such partnership in the country between a health plan and Verde Environmental Technologies to distribute the Deterra Pouches on such a large scale,” said Alicia Gerald, Vice President of Government Programs–Medicare, Optima Health. “Optima Health is proud to provide this service to communities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and in North Carolina.”

Starting in July 2022, Deterra at-home drug deactivation and disposal pouches will be available to patients at more than 60 Sentara Family & Internal Medicine Physicians offices and Sentara surgical locations in Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. Surgical providers will also dispense pouches to patients during their first post-op surgery visit, and Optima Health will hand out pouches at various community events.

Deterra Pouches use proprietary activated carbon technology and tap water to deactivate prescription and over-the-counter medications, including opioids and fentanyl. The plant-based pouch is then safe to throw away in household trash, preventing medications from being misused or contaminating landfills and waterways.

“We see safe drug disposal as part of the organization’s broader commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of Virginia and North Carolina residents,” said Dennis Matheis, President of Sentara Health Plans and incoming President and CEO of Sentara Healthcare. “With a nearly 54 percent increase in fatal overdoses in the U.S. from 2019 to 2021\* and a similar rise in non-fatal overdoses, Deterra Pouches will be an important tool to help educate our community on safe medication disposal and to prevent drug misuse.”

“We’re thrilled to work with Optima Health, the first health plan to distribute Deterra Pouches throughout Virginia and North Carolina,” said Jason Sundby, Chairman and CEO of Verde Environmental Technologies, Inc. “With opioid misuse and overdoses spiking in recent years, we look forward to working with Optima Health and Sentara Healthcare to help tackle this epidemic head-on and get prevention tools into more hands.”

### **About Optima Health**

Optima Health, based in Virginia, provides health insurance coverage to more than 560,000 members. With more than 35 years of experience, Optima Health offers a suite of commercial products including consumer-directed, employee-owned, and employer-sponsored plans, individual health plans, employee assistance programs and plans serving Medicare and Medicaid enrollees. Its provider network features approximately 35,000 providers including specialists, primary care physicians and hospitals across Virginia. Optima Health also offers programs to support members with chronic illnesses, customized wellness programs and integrated clinical and behavioral health services, as well as pharmacy management—all to help members improve their health every day. The company's goals are to provide better health, be easy to use and offer services that are a great value. Optima Health is a service of Sentara Healthcare. To learn more about Optima Health, visit [optimahealth.com](https://optimahealth.com).

### **About Verde Environmental Technologies, Inc.**

Minneapolis-based Verde Environmental Technologies Inc. is a privately owned company committed to developing research-based, scientifically proven solutions to reduce drug abuse, misuse and negative environmental impact. The patented Deterra® Drug Deactivation and Disposal System is powered by proprietary activated carbon, which permanently deactivates drugs. Deterra is highly effective in adsorbing and firmly binding drugs, rendering them inert, unavailable for misuse and safe for the environment.

\* [cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs\\_press\\_releases/2022/202205.htm](https://cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/202205.htm)