



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Take back expired, unwanted prescription drugs on Oct. 26

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On Saturday, Oct. 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. local agencies and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public its seventh opportunity in three years to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to a location near you. To find a nearby location, please visit adph.org and click on the "Got Drugs" link. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson said, "We are aware that many times legitimately obtained prescription drugs are no longer needed and have the potential for misuse. Everyone should be mindful of the risks they pose and use this opportunity to dispose of their medications in this safe way."

Last April, Americans turned in 371 tons (over 742,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at over 5,800 sites operated by the DEA and its thousands of state and local law enforcement partners. In its six previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners took in over 2.8 million pounds—more than 1,400 tons—of pills.

"I am encouraged and proud of Alabama's continued support of this valuable program," said Attorney General Luther Strange. "Safely removing and disposing of potentially dangerous controlled substances from our homes is an important and basic step to fighting drug abuse and drug-related crimes. The overwhelming participation in previous Prescription Drug Take-Back Days has taken potentially dangerous drugs out of people's homes, where they could be stolen by burglars or misused by children, making our state safer for the people of Alabama."

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines—flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash—both pose potential safety and health hazards.

DEA is in the process of approving new regulations that implement the federal Safe and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an “ultimate user” (that is, a patient, his or her family member or a pet owner) of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the U.S. Attorney General to accept them.

The act also allows the Attorney General to authorize long-term care facilities to dispose of their residents’ controlled substances in certain instances.

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