



Date: October 4, 2012
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Number: 202-307-7977

NEWS RELEASE

DEA's Fifth National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day Results in Another Big Haul

OCT 04 (WASHINGTON, D.C.) –For the fifth time in two years, Americans emptied medicine cabinets, bedside tables, and kitchen drawers of unwanted, unused, and expired prescription drugs and took them to collection sites located throughout the United States as part of the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day.

Last Saturday, September 29, DEA's state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, working at more than 5,263 locations, collected 488,395 pounds (244 tons) of prescription medications from members of the public. When added to the collections from DEA's previous four Take-Back events, more than 2 million pounds (1,018 tons) of prescription medications were removed from circulation.

According to the 2011 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), more than six million Americans abuse prescription drugs. That same study revealed more than 70 percent of people abusing prescription pain relievers got them through friends or relatives, a statistic that includes raiding the family medicine cabinet.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposal, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of these medications.

The DEA's Take-Back events are a significant piece of the White House's prescription drug abuse prevention strategy released in 2011 by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Disposal of unwanted, unused or expired drugs is one of four strategies for reducing prescription drug abuse and diversion laid out in *Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis*. The other strategies include education of health care providers, patients, parents and youth; enhancing and encouraging the establishment of prescription drug monitoring programs in all the states; and increased enforcement to address doctor shopping and pill mills.

Shortly after DEA's first Take-Back Day event two years ago, Congress passed, and President Obama signed, the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amended the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), allowing DEA to develop permanent, ongoing, and responsible methods for disposal. Prior to the passage of the Disposal Act, the CSA provided no legal means for transferring possession of controlled substance medications from users to other individuals for disposal. DEA is currently in the process of drafting regulations, but until the creation of permanent regulations, DEA will continue to hold Take-Back Days.