



NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY

Southern Maryland law enforcement agencies in cooperation, with the Drug Enforcement Administration, participated in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 30, 2011. The purpose of National Take Back Day is to provide an avenue for citizens nationwide to safely dispose of unwanted and/or unused prescription medications. This effort is an attempt to remove and safely dispose of potentially dangerous prescription drugs, particularly controlled substances, from household medicine cabinets.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration:

"Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States are alarmingly high—more Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health." (DEA, 2011)

Individuals who abuse prescription drugs often steal them from the medicine cabinets of family and friends. Improper disposal of unused medication, e.g. flushing the drug down a sink or toilet or simply throwing it in a trash receptacle, causes biohazard concerns and risks the medication falling into the hands of individuals who will abuse or potentially sell the drug.

"The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, as well as other law enforcement agencies in Southern Maryland, provides a 24-hour secure drop box in the front lobby of our headquarters where citizens can drop off medications without any questions asked. We believe providing this service year round is important in reducing the chances of having these dangerous substances fall into the wrong hands." (Sheriff Tim Cameron, St. Mary's County, Maryland)

On April 30, 2011 many law enforcement agencies partnered with other civic organizations to provide additional medication drop-off points. Sheriff Mike Evans dispatched a deputy to the Asbury Senior Community to collect medications from seniors who generally are unable to get to the daily drop-off at the Calvert County Sheriff's Office.

"Our participation in National Take Back Day is another example of our commitment to providing the highest quality law enforcement service possible to the citizens of Calvert County. Prescription drug abuse is a national epidemic that unfortunately, and despite our tireless efforts, affects all people in Calvert County. We will always take advantage of opportunities like this one, and remain focused on our continuous efforts to combat and prevent prescription drug abuse and bring those who violate the law to justice." (Sheriff Mike Evans, Calvert County, Maryland)

"The community's support and participation has contributed to the success of this and many other cooperative efforts in southern Maryland. The Maryland State Police, along with our law enforcement partners, commends the citizens for their dedication to our regional public safety efforts." (Lt. Randy Stephens, Maryland State Police)

"In Charles County, we collected 10 large garbage bags of medication," said Charles County Sheriff Rex Coffey. "That is a lot of medication and because of this initiative and the enthusiastic response from our community; we're keeping it away from people who would abuse it and preventing it from harming our environment." (Sheriff Rex Coffey, Charles County, Maryland)