

DEA'S NINTH AND FINAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY BEING HELD SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27

New Disposal Rules in Effect Next Month Provide for Convenient, Ongoing Disposal Opportunities for Patients' Unwanted Pharmaceuticals

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This Saturday, September 27, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and almost 4,000 of its national, tribal, and community law enforcement partners will hold the ninth National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. Americans can take their expired, unneeded, or unwanted prescription drugs to one of over 5,200 collection sites across the country between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. local time. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

The public can find a nearby collection site by visiting www.dea.gov, clicking on the “Got Drugs?” icon, and following the links to a database where they enter their zip code. Or they can call 800-882-9539. Only pills and other solids, like patches, can be brought to the collection sites—liquids and needles or other sharps will not be accepted.

Unused medications in homes create a public health and safety concern, because they can be accidentally ingested, stolen, misused, and abused. While the number of Americans who currently abuse prescription drugs dropped in 2013 to 6.5 million from 6.8 million in 2012, that is still more than double the number of those using heroin, cocaine, and hallucinogens like LSD and Ecstasy *combined*, according to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. In addition, 22,134 Americans died in 2011 from overdoses of prescription medications, including 16,651 from narcotic painkillers, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey of users cited above also found that the majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

The public's enormous response to DEA's eight prior National Take Back Days demonstrates its recognition of the need for a way to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous prescription drugs. Last April Americans turned in over 780,000 pounds (390 tons) of prescription drugs. Since its first National Take Back Day in September of 2010, DEA has collected more than 4.1 million pounds (over 2,100 tons) of prescription drugs throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories.

DEA began hosting National Prescription Drug Take-Back events four years ago because at that time the Controlled Substances Act made no legal provision for patients to rid themselves of unwanted controlled substance prescription drugs except to give them to law enforcement; it banned pharmacies and hospitals from accepting them. Most people flushed their unused prescription drugs down the toilet, threw them in the trash, or kept them in the household medicine cabinet, resulting in contamination of the water supply and the theft and abuse of the prescription drugs.

The week after DEA's first Take Back Day, the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 was enacted. The Act authorized DEA to develop and implement regulations that outline methods the public and long-term care facilities can use to transfer pharmaceutical controlled substances and other prescription drugs to authorized collectors for the purpose of disposal. While those regulations were being developed and approved, the DEA sponsored seven more take-back events.

DEA's new disposal regulations were published in the *Federal Register* on September 9 and can be viewed at <http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov> or at www.regulations.gov. DEA's goal in implementing the Act is to expand the options available to safely and securely dispose of potentially dangerous prescription medications on a routine basis. At this time, DEA has no plans to sponsor more nationwide Take-Back Days in order to give authorized collectors the opportunity to provide this valuable service to their communities.

The Final Rule authorizes certain DEA registrants (manufacturers, distributors, reverse distributors, narcotic treatment programs, retail pharmacies, and hospitals/clinics with an on-site pharmacy) to modify their registration with the DEA to become authorized collectors. All collectors may operate a collection receptacle at their registered location, and collectors with an on-site means of destruction may operate a mail-back program. Retail pharmacies and hospitals/clinics with an on-site pharmacy may operate collection receptacles at long-term care facilities. The public may find authorized collectors in their communities by calling the DEA Office of Diversion Control's Registration Call Center at 1-800-882-9539.

Law enforcement continues to have autonomy with respect to how they collect controlled substance prescription drugs from ultimate users, including holding take-back events. Any person or entity—DEA registrant or non-registrant—may partner with law enforcement to conduct take-back events. Patients also may continue to utilize the guidelines for the disposal of pharmaceutical controlled substances listed by the [Food and Drug Administration](#) and the [Environmental Protection Agency](#). Any method of patient disposal that was valid prior to these new regulations being implemented continues to be valid.