



Drug Enforcement Administration
ATLANTA FIELD DIVISION
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www.dea.gov

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NEWS RELEASE

DEA'S FOURTH PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK EVENT YIELDS FRUITFUL RESULTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND NATIONWIDE

MAY 4 – COLUMBIA – South Carolinians participating in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA's) fourth National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on April 28, 2012, turned in approximately 3,763 pounds of unwanted or expired medications for safe and proper disposal at numerous collection sites throughout the state. This number exceeded the amount collected during the third Take-Back event held this past October, which was approximately 3,300 pounds.

Nationally, citizens turned in a record-breaking 552,161 pounds (276 tons) of unwanted or expired medications for safe and proper disposal at the 5,659 take-back sites that were available in all 50 states and U.S. territories. When the results of the four Take Back Days to date are combined, the DEA and its state, local, and tribal law-enforcement and community partners have removed over 1.5 million pounds (774 tons) of medication from circulation.

Harry S. Sommers, Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the DEA Atlanta Field Division commented, "The Prescription Drug Take-Back campaign was a huge success. More than 552,161 pounds (276 tons) of unwanted or expired medications were turned in at numerous sites throughout the country. As a result, these products will not end up in the hands of a would-be abuser. This event was critical in stemming the tide of prescription drug abuse in this country. I would like to thank the multitude of partners (both law enforcement and non-law enforcement) who worked tirelessly to make this event a success."

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--more Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the 2010

National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

Four days after the first Take-Back event in September 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an “ultimate user” of controlled substance medications dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the 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. DEA is in the process of drafting regulations to implement the Act.

SAC Harry S. Sommers of the DEA Atlanta Field Division encourages parents, along with their children, to educate themselves about the dangers of legal and illegal drugs by visiting DEA’s interactive websites at www.justthinktwice.com, www.GetSmartAboutDrugs.com and www.dea.gov.

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