

Department of Justice

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FIFTH NATIONAL TAKE BACK INITIATIVE

TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 29TH

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul Jr. and Drug Enforcement Administration Resident Agent in Charge Dale Kasprzyk today announced that the public will have another opportunity to prevent prescription pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous prescription drugs that are expired, unused or unwanted.

The fifth National Take Back Initiative will take place this Saturday, September 29th from 10:00A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Last April, Americans turned in 552,161 pounds—276 tons—of prescription drugs at over 5,600 sites operated by the DEA and nearly 4,300 state and local law enforcement partners. In its four previous Take Back events, the DEA and its partners took in over 1.5 million pounds—nearly 775 tons—of pills.

Locally, the DEA recovered 12-thousand pounds or six tons of unwanted prescription pills, the highest collection amount in the country.

The event is free and anonymous with no questions asked. The public can drop off expired, unused or unwanted prescription drugs which could be dangerous if left in the family's medicine cabinet.

The National Take Back Initiative coincides with this week's launch of the Partnership at Drugfree.org's 'Medicine Abuse Project.' The Western District of New York is one of 94 U.S. Attorneys' offices teaming up with "The Partnership" which aims to curb the abuse of medicine while encouraging parents and the public to take action. A primary focus of the initiative will be to educate communities about the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter medicines. The goal is to prevent half a million teens from abusing medicine within five years. Consider the statistics:

- One in six teens has used a prescription drug that was not prescribed by a doctor.
- 90% of addictions start in the teenage years.
- Prescription medicines are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12 and 13 years olds.
- Opioid pain relievers are responsible for more overdose deaths than cocaine and heroin combined.
- Two-thirds of teens who abuse pain relievers say they get them from family members and friends.
- Emergency room visits involving misuse or abuse of prescription medications more than doubled between 2004 and 2010.

“Prescription pill abuse has become one of the most urgent public health matters confronting our country and region,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “Improperly taking even one pill can fundamentally change a person’s life forever—leading to a life of addiction and in some cases, death. It really is this simple, if a pill is not available, it can’t be taken. And for every pill not taken, our ability to defeat this health epidemic improves.”

“We are deeply grateful to the United States Attorneys’ Offices around the nation for joining this collaborative Project to effectively address the intentional abuse of prescription and over-the-counter cough medicine,” said Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org. “The U.S. Department of Justice has been an active supporter of our innovative community-based prevention programs. Forging new relationships with partners in the federal criminal justice community is a significant strategic step forward as we build a sustained public/private initiative. The influential voice of U.S. Attorneys’ Offices will help greatly in educating parents and teens about the significant and largely underestimated risks of medicine abuse.”

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