

# Madison County Drug Take-Back Program works in flawless fashion, continues growth

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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**Madison County State's Attorney Thomas Gibbons, Sheriff John Lakin, Coroner Steve Nonn, the Alton and Edwardsville Police Departments** have all taken the **National Drug Take-Back Initiative** seriously and it has paid off.

Coordinated by the **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)**, there are several permanent drop-off sites for unwanted or expired prescription drugs. The law enforcement community in general in **Madison County** has been receptive of the Drug Take-Back program.

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, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

Gibbons explained this past weekend on a Drug Take-Back Day in Madison County that this is something they do a few times a year to bring awareness to the issue.

“Dropping off unwanted prescription medications and getting them out of the medicine cabinets makes sure that people aren’t going to be an accidental dealer to one of their

relatives, kids or family members," he said. "About 70 percent of those 12 to 17 get their medications from family and friends. It is a really important way to put adults at ease they won't be used by anyone else."

Gibbons praised the sheriff and the coroner for working together to help establish 18 permanent locations at area law enforcement facilities.

"People can go into these facilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week and just walk in, open up a box and leave their unwanted prescription medications," he said. "Four times a year, the sheriff's department takes these to an incinerator. We do these awareness days to remind people of the importance of locking up their medications and disposing of the ones they don't need."



**Edwardsville Police Department Lt. Chris Byrne** was stationed Saturday at the Edwardsville **Shop 'N Save**. He said the program definitely keeps the unwanted prescription medications out of the wrong hands. He said the Edwardsville Police Department is in full support of the program.



Last April, Americans turned in 447 tons (over 893,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at almost 5,400 sites operated by the DEA and more than 4,200 of its state and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 11 previous Take-Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in over 6.4 million pounds — about 3,200 tons — of pills.

For more information on Lock Your Meds, visit the State's Attorney website at [www.madco-sa.org](http://www.madco-sa.org). Other local police departments participating in National Take-Back Day include Edwardsville, East Alton, Alton, Highland and Maryville. More information on those locations can be found at [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/index.html](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html).

[A list of these sites can be found here.](#)

