

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Brings In Nearly 745,000 Pounds Of Unneeded Medications

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ST. LOUIS– The Drug Enforcement Administration, along with its law enforcement partners, has removed close to 745,000 pounds of unneeded prescriptions from medicine cabinets across the country as part of DEA's ongoing commitment to turn the tide

against the U.S. opioid epidemic. Following last month's 21st National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, the program has removed more than 15.2 million pounds of medication from circulation since its inception.

On Oct. 23, with close to 5,000 collection sites nationwide, DEA and its more than 4,200 state and local law enforcement partners came together to help the public rid their homes of unneeded medications—those that are old, unwanted, or no longer needed—that too often become a gateway to addiction. These efforts align directly with DEA's priority to combat the rise of overdoses plaguing the United States.

DEA's St. Louis Division collected a total of 37,189 pounds. That breaks down to 26,190 pounds in Missouri; 7,742 pounds in Kansas; and 3,257 pounds in southern Illinois. The April 2021 Take Back Day collected almost 55,000 pounds. The number of organizations participating increased to 262, up from the April 2021 Take Back Day of 198 organizations.

“Ultimately, we want the amount of unwanted medication collected during our bi-annual events to decrease,” said Diversion Program Manager Inez Davis, DEA's lead for the Take Back Day event in the states of Missouri and Kansas, and southern Illinois. “This is an indication that people are using the year-round drop-off locations rather than waiting for DEA's Take Back Day. We want to prevent unwanted medications from being diverted for untended purposes, as soon as they are no longer needed.”

“On DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, communities across America came together to rid medicine cabinets of unneeded medications, helping to prevent prescription drug misuse,” said DEA Administrator Anne Milgram. “Take Back Day is a critical effort to curb the historic surge in U.S. overdoses. We know prevention starts at home. The simple step of clearing out medications that are no longer needed makes our homes safer, prevents prescription drug misuse, and, ultimately, can help save lives.”

According to a report published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a majority of people who misused a prescription medication obtained the medicine from a family member or friend. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that last year, more than 93,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States, marking the largest number of drug-related deaths ever recorded in a year. Opioid-related deaths accounted for 75 percent of all overdose deaths in 2020.

Complete results from DEA's 21st National Prescription Drug Take Back Day are available at www.DEATakeBack.com. For those who missed DEA's Take Back Day,

there are opportunities to regularly and safely dispose of unneeded medications at [more than 13,000](#) pharmacies, hospitals, police departments, and businesses working to help clean out medicine cabinets throughout the year.