Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department

Drew Sugars
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-4192

Date: January 28, 2010
Time: 12:00pm

News Release

Operation Medicine Cabinet Expands

Prescription drug drop-boxes now available throughout county.

Santa Barbara—People looking for a place to dispose of their unwanted household medications now have several drop-off points throughout Santa Barbara County.

The Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department and the County Public Works Department have installed secure drop-boxes at nine Sheriff's Substations which now allows residents to get rid of all types of unwanted medications, including prescription and over the counter drugs.

In late 2009, both Departments hosted several drop-off events that were hugely successful. Residents will no longer have to wait for another event. The new drop-boxes now provide residents a safe drop-off point for unwanted medications, without the fear of them getting into the wrong hands or damaging the environment.

The Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division of Public Works is supporting Operation Medicine Cabinet using funds from its solid and hazardous waste program. Sheriff's staff will collect, package, document, and transport the collected medications to an approved disposal facility. Please leave medications in original or sealed containers. This program is made available to our communities for household medications only; no commercial use of any kind will be accepted.

There are four primary reasons to remove the medications from the household:

1. Youth abuse
    - Every day, 2500 kids age 12 to 17 try a painkiller for the first time.
    - Teens now abuse Rx or Over the Counter drugs more than almost all others combined.
    - 1 in 3 teens reports having a close friend who abuses Rx drugs.
    - 1 in 4 teens reports having a close friend who abuses cough medicine.

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2. Accidental Child Ingestion
    - Each year thousands of young children are injured or die from accidentally taking medications.
    - Accidental poisoning from medications is the forth most common cause of death in children under five years old.

3. Improper or Accidental use by Adults
    - Notably increased accidents with seniors.
    - Expired medications pose health risks.
    - Accidental use of expired medications can create drug interaction injuries.
    - Use of medications prescribed for other persons is illegal and dangerous.

4. Pollution of water bodies when disposed of in trash or sewage systems
    - Current sewage treatment methods do not effectively eliminate medical waste, allowing the waste elements to enter water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and the ocean
    - Disposing of medications in the trash can potentially pollute landfills and groundwater supplies.

Residents can drop off unwanted medications during business hours at the following Sheriff Substations:

Carpinteria	5775 Carpinteria Ave.	(805) 684-4561
Santa Barbara	4434 Calle Real	(805) 681-4100
Goleta	7042 Market Place Drive	(805) 681-1540
Isla Vista	6504 Trigo Road	(805) 681-4179
Lompoc	3500 Harris Grade	(805) 737-7737
Buellton	140 West Highway 246	(805) 686-8150
Solvang	1745 Mission Drive	(805) 686-5000
Santa Maria	812-A West Foster Road	(805) 934-6150
New Cuyama (Coming Soon)	215 Newsome Street	(661) 766-2310

For more information:

Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division of the Public Works Department
(805) 882-3615 www.lessismore.org

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department (805) 681-4100 www.sbsheriff.org

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