



CITY OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

PULLMAN – April 29, 2017 is the 13th National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) sponsors this event to encourage safe and proper disposal of unwanted or expired medications.

Pullman has been a regional leader in this effort by providing a prescription drug drop box available 24 hours a day, every day in the Police Department lobby since 2010. Since then, the Pullman Police Department has collected and disposed of over 1,725 pounds of prescription drugs. Last October, Americans turned in 366 tons (over 730,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at almost 5,200 sites operated by the DEA and more than 4,000 of its state and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 12 previous Take Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in over 7.1 million pounds - more than 3,500 tons - of pills. Collection sites in every local community can be found by going to www.dea.gov.

The past practice for disposing of unused medicines, flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash, both pose potential safety and health hazards. Pullman Public Works Director Kevin Gardes adds, "According to EPA, contaminants of emerging concern include pharmaceuticals that are flushed down toilets and end up in low levels of municipal wastewater treatment plant effluent. There is a concern these compounds may have an impact on aquatic life."

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 resulting from these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

When transporting prescription drugs, state law requires that they be in the original prescription containers with the labels attached. It is illegal to possess prescription drugs outside of the original container or to possess prescription drugs that are prescribed to someone else. The prescription labeling can be removed at the Police Department or the drugs can be placed in plastic zipper bags that are provided by the Police Department. If placed in a bag, the name of the drug should be written on the bag. By using the prescription drug drop box, your discarded drugs will be incinerated at a facility approved by the EPA and Washington Department of Ecology. We will accept all prescription medication from individuals only; medical offices and care facilities should follow protocol with their contracted disposal vendors.

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