

HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

News Release



Results from the Medicine Collection Event

May 3, 2011 (MINNEAPOLIS) – The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and Hennepin County would like to thank citizens for participating in the Medicine Collection Event that took place in Brooklyn Center on Saturday, April 30.

Results include the following:

- Several hundred citizens dropped off medications at the collection event.
- Approximately 100 pounds of controlled medications were collected.
- The most common controlled substances collected: Hydrocodone (such as Vicodin), Oxycodone, and Codeine.

In addition, several large barrels of prescription and over-the-counter medications were collected. Those items included antibiotics, cough syrup, vitamins/supplements, and pet medications.

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Environmental Services, and the city of Brooklyn Center were sponsors of the Medicine Collection Event. Other partners included North Memorial Hospital/Partnership for Change, University of Minnesota pharmacy students, the University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps, and Clean Harbors Environmental Services.

All items that were collected were taken to incinerators for destruction --which is the most environmentally-friendly method of disposal. The incinerators are out of state.

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It is not recommended to flush medicines down the drain or to throw them in the garbage because medications in waste water or in landfills can contaminate bodies of water, harm wildlife and end up in drinking water supplies. Citizens are urged to participate in future Medicine Collection Events in order to dispose of medications in a safe and legal manner.

The next Medicine Collection Event in Hennepin County will take place on June 2, 2011 at the Richfield Ice Arena (636 66th St. E., Richfield, MN) from 3 p.m. – 7 p.m. Two additional collection events will take place in the fall. For information, go to www.hennepin.us/medicine.

Citizens who participated in these events help to raise awareness about prescription abuse, they help to reduce the supply of medications that potentially could be abused, and they help to protect the environment by preventing improper disposal of medications.

Medications in the home have become a problem for a number of reasons:

- Unwanted, unused medications stored at home pose safety and health threats and can lead to poisoning or abuse.
- Among young people, seven of the top 10 abused substances are pharmaceuticals – many of them taken from the medicine cabinets of family and friends.
- Some 40 percent of teens believe prescription medicines are “much safer” than illegal drugs.
- Medications are a major law enforcement problem because some of the drugs are controlled substances, and it is very difficult to legally dispose of them.

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