

HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

News Release



Successful Results from Unwanted Medicine Collection Event

September 27, 2010 (MINNEAPOLIS) – The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and Hennepin County would like to thank citizens for participating in the county's first Unwanted Medicine Collection Event that took place in St. Louis Park on Saturday, September 25.

Results include the following:

- More than 700 citizens dropped off medications at the collection event
- Tens of thousands of pills were collected – both controlled substances & over-the-counter
- The most common controlled substances collected: Oxycodone, Vicodin (and other Hydrocodone items), Codeine, and Fentanyl

All items that were collected were taken to hazardous waste incinerators for destruction. The event also collected over-the-counter medications, pet medicines, and vitamin/supplements.

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Environmental Services, Human Services and Public Health Department and the City of St. Louis Park were sponsors of the Unwanted Medicine Collection Event. Other partners included the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Hennepin County Medical Reserve Corps.

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

This is the first time Hennepin County has offered a collection event for medications. It was organized to coincide with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's national "Drug Takeback Day."

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.
- Disposal of unwanted medications also raises environmental concerns. Medicines flushed down the drain or disposed of in landfills can contaminate bodies of water, harm wildlife and end up in drinking water supplies.

For citizens who did not attend the event and would like more information about medication disposal, visit www.hennepin.us/medicine or call Hennepin County Environmental Services at 612-348-3777 Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For media inquires, contact PIO Lisa Kiava at 612-919-5918 or lisa.kiava@co.hennepin.mn.us

###