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# Permanent drug take back boxes placed throughout county

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The Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center (NWAMHC) Prevention Program has launched a collection of Drug Take Back receptacles in five locations in Walker County. The addition of these take back boxes will offer county residents convenient locations to dispose of unwanted prescription medication.

This is a free service as just one part of a comprehensive strategy in Walker County to reduce the public health and environmental impacts resulting from unwanted medications.

Funded through the SPF-Rx grant from the Alabama State Department of Mental Health, Walker County is one of four counties in the State of Alabama given funding through this initiative. The grant will allow implementation of information distribution and will work towards gaining community partners to create awareness of this growing concern.

The locked receptacles allow residents to dispose of unused medications – both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription (Rx) drugs free, no questions asked.

Over 1 billion in leftover drugs are flushed down drains, tossed in the trash, or relegated to medicine cabinets each year. When flushed or trashed, over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs can potentially contaminate open waterways and local drinking water.

Equally, dangerous, drugs left in the home can find their way into the hands of children or potential addicts.

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States. According to the CDC, one person dies every 19 minutes from prescription drug abuse. It has been reported Alabama is the #1 State in the country for prescription opioid use.

In 2017 Governor Kay Ivey created a council tasked with developing a strategic plan “that establishes recommendation for policy, regulatory and legislative actions to address the overdose crisis in Alabama.

In a news release to report findings of the council acting State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris said, “Opioid addiction and abuse is a tremendous problem that affects Alabama in many different ways. Our hospitals, schools, churches and prisons are all struggling to deal with the problems caused by addiction and by increasing numbers of opioid deaths.”

The council’s report presents a four-pronged actions plan to address prevention of opioid misuse, and intervention with the law enforcement and justice systems.

As part of Walker County’s effort in reducing prescription drug misuse and abuse, NWAMHC Prevention and law enforcement partners will participate in the DEA National Drug Take Back Day twice each year. This is a well-publicized event and hopefully will increase awareness of the program to allow citizens to dispose of their unwanted or unused medication with no questions asked.

The 5 participating locations are Jasper City Police Department, 1610 Alabama Avenue Jasper, Al 35501; Walker County Sheriff’s Department, 2001 2nd Ave, Jasper, Al 35501; Carbon Hill Police Department, 170 2nd Ave NW, Carbon Hill, Al 35549; Sumiton Police Department, 416 State Street, Sumiton, Al 35148 and Bowie’s Pharmacy, 5100 Curry Highway, Jasper, Al 35503.



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