



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Wolf Administration, PA Office of Attorney General Join Lebanon VA Medical Center Officials to Encourage Participation in National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day**

**Lebanon, PA** – Today, the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Department of Aging, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' (DMVA) Counterdrug Joint Task Force (CJTF) joined officials from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General and Lebanon VA Medical Center to encourage Pennsylvanians to take part in the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day initiative this Saturday, October 29.

Since the inception of Pennsylvania's drug take-back program in 2015, more than one million pounds of prescription medication have been destroyed across the 890 take-back boxes in all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

"Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is a great and timely reminder for all Pennsylvanians to clean out their medicine cabinets and get rid of expired, unused and unwanted prescription medications in a safe manner. It goes a long way in helping to combat prescription drug misuse," said DDAP Secretary Jen Smith. "If you are unable to participate on Saturday, there are hundreds of boxes throughout Pennsylvania year-round to take advantage of."

"The simple act of disposing unused medications can have positive and profound impacts in our local communities," said Paul Carnes, PharmD, MS, FACHE, Chief of Pharmacy, at the Lebanon VA Medical Center. "We are grateful that this National Prescription Take-Back Day allows us the opportunity to support the safety and well-being of veterans and non-veterans alike in South Central Pennsylvania."

The CJTF is operated by the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) and is responsible, along with narcotics agents from the Attorney General's office, for collecting and weighing discarded prescription drugs through Pennsylvania's drug take-back program. In addition, the CJTF provides counterdrug support to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, and educational and government organizations that request assistance at no cost to the agency supported. The PNG is part of the DMVA's dual mission, which also includes supporting Pennsylvania's more than 700,000 veterans.

"As the opioid epidemic continues in Pennsylvania, we are pleased to play an important role in securing and disposing of unneeded and expired prescription drugs," said LTC Max Furman Jr.,

coordinator of the PA Counterdrug Joint Task Force and commandant of the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center. “The CJTF is honored to be part of this inter-agency program that improves the safety of commonwealth citizens, while keeping the environment clean of improperly discarded drugs.”

The State Police aim to provide a safe and convenient means of disposal year-round by collecting unwanted prescription medications at 65 stations across the commonwealth. No personal information is required, and drop-off boxes are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More than 2,700 pounds of medications have been collected at PSP stations so far this year.

“We are committed to making our communities safer and healthier, and we can do this by stopping unused prescription drugs from getting into the wrong hands,” said Colonel Robert Evanchick, commissioner of the PSP. “Some pharmaceuticals can be just as dangerous as street drugs when taken without a prescription, and people who misuse these medications often obtain them from a family member or friend.”

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, nearly 90% of adults 65 and older report they are currently taking prescription medicine and older adults are also more likely to be taking multiple prescription medications. This can lead to a higher rate of exposure to potentially addictive medications. The increased availability of prescription medication in the homes of older adults makes it vitally important to regularly clean out and dispose of old, unwanted, or unneeded prescription medication.

“Unused or unwanted prescriptions are a potential hazard that can lead to misuse, developing a substance use disorder or lethal overdose,” said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. “Prescription medications can be stolen, sold, or used by others for whom they were not prescribed. They can be accidentally ingested or misused by other family members including children. We encourage older adults, their family, and caregivers to consider these risks and to take proper action to discard unused or unwanted medications.”

The DEA has offered National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day since 2010 with the goal of fighting prescription drug misuse by creating convenient ways to dispose of medication that would otherwise be at risk of misuse in home medicine cabinets. During the first of two National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days in April 2022, the DEA and more than 4,400 law enforcement agencies collected more than 720,000 pounds of unused medication across more than 5,000 collection sites.

For more information on National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, visit [takebackday.dea.gov](https://takebackday.dea.gov).

You can find one of Pennsylvania’s year-round drug take-back locations at [ddap.pa.gov/drugtakeback](https://ddap.pa.gov/drugtakeback).

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