

Time to dispose of prescription drugs

On Oct. 29 from 10am-2pm, the South Lake Tahoe Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration will give the public another opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs.



Bring your medications for disposal to Safeway at 1020 Johnson Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Last April, Americans turned in 376,593 pounds – 188 tons – of prescription drugs at nearly 5,400 sites operated by the DEA and more than 3,000 state and local law enforcement partners.

Other jurisdictions throughout the U.S. are collecting drugs the same day.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines – flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash – pose potential safety and health hazards.

Four days after the first Take-Back event in September 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act

of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an "ultimate user" of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the attorney general to accept them. The act also allows the attorney general to authorize long-term care facilities to dispose of their residents' controlled substances in certain instances. DEA has begun drafting regulations to implement the act, a process that can take as long as 24 months. Until new regulations are in place, local law enforcement agencies like South Lake Tahoe Police Department and the DEA will continue to have prescription drug take-back events every few months.