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**National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Invites Communities to Properly Dispose of Unwanted and Expired Medications for Free**

Stockton, CA (April 22, 2024) – On Saturday, April 27, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., San Joaquin County Public Health Services and the San Joaquin County Opioid Safety Coalition will partner with local law enforcement and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to provide free drop-off locations for expired and unwanted medications, vaping devices, and pet medications. This event provides a safe, anonymous, and environmentally friendly method of disposal to prevent the mishandling and/or illicit distribution of pharmaceuticals. Both over-the-counter and prescription medications are eligible for free drop-off.

The public is invited to use any of the five drop-off sites throughout the county, including:

- Code 3 Wear, 304 Lincoln Center, Stockton, 95207
- Stockton Unified School District, Dept. of Public Safety, 640 N. San Joaquin Street, Stockton, 95202
- Lodi Police Department, 215 W. Elm St., Lodi, 9524
- Young's Payless Market IGA, 18980 CA-88, Lockeford, 95237
- Tracy Police Department, 1000 Civic Center Drive, Tracy, 95376

This service is free of charge and will not require divulging any personal information. Please note that sites *cannot* accept needles or [sharps](#) materials. Information will be provided on where these materials can be safely disposed.

Additionally, the following should be considered:

- Pills may be brought loose and without packaging, in blister packs, or in their original prescription bottles.
- Liquid products, such as cough syrup, should remain sealed in the original container.
- Vaping devices and cartridges must have their lithium batteries removed.
- Pet medications will also be accepted

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the United States are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses. Current data reveal that most abused prescription drugs come from family and friends, specifically from home medicine cabinets. To help prevent this, the timely disposal of unused or expired medications is essential. Prescription drugs can often end up in the wrong hands, fueling a national overdose epidemic that kills more Americans annually than automobile accidents, according to DEA statistics.

This past Fall, more than 300 tons of unused or expired medications were collected across all national collection sites during the October 2023 National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. This will be the 26<sup>th</sup> nationwide collection event since its inception in 2010.

In addition to the DEA's bi-annual event, there are more than 11,000 authorized collection sites available nationally year-round. For more details, visit San Joaquin County's Medication and Sharps Disposal Program's website (<http://bit.ly/3IYFXGr>), or the DEA's year-round collection site locator [here](#).

For more information about the disposal of prescription drugs, or about the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day event, go to <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>.

For questions about local overdose prevention efforts, contact Rachel Zerbo, San Joaquin County Public Health Services Public Health Educator, at 209-468-2699 or [rzerbo@sjcphs.org](mailto:rzerbo@sjcphs.org). Also, visit the San Joaquin County Opioid Safety Coalition [here](#).

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