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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Works Department Reminds Residents of Safe Medication Disposal Program

With March being [Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Month](#) in California, the County's Public Works Department wants to remind the community about safe disposal options for unused and unwanted medications. At Sheriff's substations throughout the county, free drop boxes are available to deposit all types of prescription and over-the-counter medications. The program, called [Operation Medicine Cabinet](#), collects approximately 8,000 pounds of medications each year.

In addition to law enforcement sites, some pharmacies are also joining the effort and installing drop boxes for their customers. Walgreens, for example, recently announced plans to install [medication collection kiosks at 500 of their stores nationwide](#). As always, it's best to call ahead to see if your pharmacy is participating.

Expired and unwanted medications should not be stored at home. Prescription drug abuse has skyrocketed in recent years, and people of all ages are now stealing medications from friends' and family members' medicine cabinets. More Americans now die every year from drug overdoses than in motor vehicle accidents.

The old norm was to flush medications down the toilet or pour them in the sink. With advances in scientific monitoring, however, we're now finding that many of these medications slip right through wastewater treatment processes and remain in the effluent that makes its way to rivers and oceans. Some of these medications can have very disruptive impacts on fish and other aquatic organisms.

The trash is also not ideal for getting rid of unwanted medications. Children, pets, and those with drug addictions may try to retrieve medications from trash containers.

You can find more information on safe medication disposal on [LessIsMore.org](#), the region's comprehensive waste reduction and recycling website. A list of drop-off sites is available in the "Where to Go" section at the bottom of the [Household Medications page](#). You can also call our staff at 882-3615.

[Image included on following page.]

OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET



A program for Santa Barbara County
residents to safely dispose of unwanted
household medications.

Cover of the County's Operation Medicine Cabinet Brochure

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