

## Operation Pill Crusher Report:

Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> Local Law Enforcement including the Hendersonville Police Department, Laurel Park Police Department, Fletcher Police Department and the Henderson County Sheriff's Office participated in "Operation Pill Crusher", a drop-off service provided to the community to turn in their expired, unwanted and unused medications for safe destruction. These departments partnered with six area Ingles locations and collected **29,597 pills**. (We also collected cough medicines, epi-pens, over-the counter medications, vitamins, topical creams, inhalers, injectable medications and dog/cat medications.) The DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) will pick up items collected and will safely destroy them. This service will prevent these medications from being misused and out of our groundwater system. Thanks to all who participated!

## How to Safely Dispose of Expired, Unwanted and Unused Medications

If you're like most people, your medicine cabinet is full of prescription and over-the-counter medications..... Are you holding on to unwanted, unused, or expired medication? Do you know how to dispose of them safely?

The easiest way to dispose of medicine is through a community drop-off program. If one is not available in your area, there are easy steps you can take to properly dispose of medications at home.

Cleaning out your medicine cabinet is an important step in protecting your family's health. Check all medication's expiration date. Do not hold on to expired or unused medication. It is best to destroy all of these immediately.

First, scratch out or mark over your personal information on the medicine bottle, including address, telephone number, and patient's name. Cover any information that could be used to steal your identity.

The next step is to destroy or alter the medication so that it's no longer usable. This can be done in a variety of ways, but is usually done by crushing the medication and adding substances that will change its taste. For example, you can add salt, flour, or other spices to liquid medicine, and mix or crush pills with coffee grounds, used kitty litter or other undesirable substances. This will prevent anyone from wanting to use them.

After destroying the medication you will need to seal the bottle with strong tape such as duct or packing tape. This will ensure the container from leaking after disposal.

The final step in the disposal process is to disguise the drugs in a nontransparent container or sealable bags. These could include an old margarine tub, other plastic container, or bag. Then place this in the nearest trash collection site on pick-up day! Following these guidelines will help keep your family, the community and the environment safe.

\*Most prescription and even some over-the-counter medications come with disposal recommendations. Check these guidelines or consult your pharmacist. Otherwise destroy, seal, and trash unwanted, unused, or expired medications.\*

Note: The FDA advises that the following drugs be flushed down the toilet instead of thrown in the trash:

**Actiq** (fentanyl citrate)  
**Daytrana Transdermal Patch** (methylphenidate)  
**Duragesic Transdermal System** (fentanyl)  
**OxyContin Tablets** (oxycodone)  
**Avinza Capsules** (morphine sulfate)  
**Baraclude Tablets** (entecavir)  
**Reyataz Capsules** (atazanavir sulfate)  
**Tequin Tablets** (gatifloxacin)  
**Zerit for Oral Solution** (stavudine)  
**Meperidine HCl Tablets**  
**Percocet** (Oxycodone and Acetaminophen)  
**Xyrem** (Sodium Oxybate)  
**Fentora** (fentanyl buccal tablet)

*Additional Note: Patients should always refer to printed material accompanying their medication for specific instructions.*

\*Information for this article was taken from the Pamlico County Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force brochure: "Rx Drug Disposal: What's In Your Medicine Cabinet" and the following websites: [www.smarxtdisposal.net](http://www.smarxtdisposal.net) and [www.drugfree.org/](http://www.drugfree.org/)