



## National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day scheduled across Alabama

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By



BIRMINGHAM, Alabama - The federal Drug Enforcement Administration will hold a National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day this Saturday to help people get prescription drugs out of their homes before they get into the hands of drug abusers.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration is sponsoring the program at more than 60 sites around Alabama from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. To find a collection site go to [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov).

Anyone can bring any prescription drug and drop them off with no questions asked, Clay A. Morris, assistant special agent in charge for the DEA in the Birmingham District Office. The collection sites will be manned by law enforcement from around the state.

While narcotic prescriptions, such as hydrocodone, oxydodone, and morphine, are the main focus of the take-back, people can drop off other prescription drugs as well, Morris said. "The only thing we don't accept is syringes," he said.

Morris said he will bring some prescriptions by a take-back site. He said his mother-in-law died in hospice care at his house. Hospice workers took away narcotics but later he said he and his wife found more prescriptions.

The prescription drugs are destroyed by incineration. The drugs collected in Alabama will be incinerated at an undisclosed site in north Alabama on an also undisclosed date.

This is the **fifth national take-back day**. Of the four previous days, more than 1.5 million pounds of prescription drugs were collected nationwide, including 6,476 pounds in Alabama.

Morris said he believes Alabama is a little lower than other states, due to a lack of getting the word out about the program dates and sites.

Law enforcement is concerned about the growing problem of prescription drug abuse, particularly among teens, Morris said.

Surveys show one in six high school seniors have used a controlled substance prescription for a non-medical reason, Morris said.

U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance said the potential for prescription drug abuse is a particular concern in Alabama because the state has a high rate of prescription drug use.

**A recent study by the health care company Express Scripts**, Alabama has the highest rate of prescription narcotic use in the nation and the fifth-highest prescription narcotic cost.

White said that the take-back program does two things - brings awareness to the problems that prescription drugs can cause and removes drugs from a house where it could be abused.

"It (the take-back) is a good way for people to get a potential risk out of their household," Vance said.

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