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Drug Take Back Day is Saturday

Cullman police department will be local dropoff site

By Ashley Graves

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— Law enforcement agencies in Cullman and across the state are beefing up efforts to combat the harmful consequences of prescription drug abuse.

On Saturday, the Cullman Police Department is teaming up with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The department will serve as a drop-off site for those who have amassed containers of unused medication. The free event will take place from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Last year the department collected 22 pounds.

“This event is for people who don’t know what to do with their prescription drugs after they’ve expired or the ones they don’t need anymore,” said David Nassetta, an investigator with the Cullman Police Department. “If there’s a temptation for people who don’t need to have it or kids, it’s not a good idea to have it around if it’s not taken initially.”

Nassetta said all of the medication turned in will be picked up by the DEA and destroyed by them as well.

According to a press release from the Alabama Department of Mental Health, in 2011 there were 6.1 million people ages 12 or older who had abused prescription-type psychotherapeutic drugs in the past. While the survey found that prescription drug abuse among young adults has decreased, the dangerous behavior of abusing prescribed medicines remains unchanged among kids and teens. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states prescription medicines are now the most commonly abused drug among 12- to 13-year-olds, and today more accidental deaths occur from drug overdoses, fueled by prescription painkillers than from car crashes.

“We are united by a common goal, and that is to reduce prescription drug abuse,” Alabama Governor Robert Bentley said. “We will work together on appropriate solutions to this problem. At the same time, we will also discuss ways to continue to ensure proper access for those who legitimately need these medications.”

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