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Unwanted drugs will be collected this Saturday

Staff report

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Area law enforcement agencies will collect unused and unwanted prescription drugs on Saturday as part of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

The agencies then will safely dispose of the drugs.

Abuse of prescription drugs is the fastest growing drug problem in the country, according to the federal government.

"National Prescription Drug Take Back Day provides those of us who have amassed containers of unused medications in our homes with an excellent opportunity to eliminate one route of easy access to prescription drugs, which thereby enhances the state's efforts to combat the harmful consequences of prescription drug abuse," said a statement from Dr. Beverly Bell-

Shambley, an associate commissioner for the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

Police will be conducting collections from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the following locations in West Alabama:

- n Northport Police Department, 3726 26th Ave., Northport.
- n Tuscaloosa Police Department, 3801 Mill Creek Ave., Tuscaloosa.
- n Bruno's Food parking lot, 2001 McFarland Blvd. East, Tuscaloosa.
- n Tuscaloosa County Sheriff's Office substation, 21689 Youngblood Parkway, McCalla.
- n Bryan Whitfield Memorial Hospital parking lot, 105 U.S. Highway 80 E., Demopolis.

Prescription medicines are the most commonly abused drugs among 12- to-13-year-olds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The centers reported more accidental deaths occur from drug overdoses fueled by prescription painkillers than from car crashes.

Bell-Shambley said Alabama's youths age 12 to 17 have exceeded the national average estimates for nonmedical use of prescription painkillers since the state began reporting that data in 2002. She said drug availability is a recognized risk factor for adolescent substance abuse.

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