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ADMH Encourages People to Take Back Unwanted Prescription Drugs April 27

MONTGOMERY – ADMH is encouraging the public to participate in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day by safely discarding of unwanted and unused prescription drugs at collection sites throughout the state. Take Back Day will be held this Saturday, April 27 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Local collection sites can be found by visiting www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html. The service is free and anonymous, with no questions asked.

This effort represents the sixth opportunity in three years to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs. The DEA, as well as state and local law enforcement, collaborate to offer the initiative. Last September, Americans turned in 244 tons of prescription drugs at over 5,200 sites. In the five previous Take Back Day events, more than two million pounds of pills have been collected.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, Americans are now advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines, flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash, pose potential safety and health hazards.

Statistics about prescription drug abuse include:

- More than seven million Americans currently abuse prescription drugs
- Prescription medicines are the most commonly abused drugs among 12 to 13 year olds
- More accidental deaths occur from overdoses, fueled by prescription drugs, than from car crashes

Alabama's youth ages 12 to 17 have exceeded national average estimates for past year nonmedical use of prescription painkillers since SAMHSA began reporting that data in 2002, and drug availability is a recognized risk factor for adolescent substance abuse. Take Back Day is one way to ensure prescription drugs do not end up in the wrong places. It offers a quick, safe and secure method of disposal.

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RESOURCES

For more information about the National Take Back initiative, visit the DEA's website at www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html.

For general information regarding substance abuse services in the state of Alabama, visit ADMH's web site at www.mh.alabama.gov, or call the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services at 334-242-3961.

Statistics were taken from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's 2010 National Survey on Drug Use & Health that can be found at <https://nsduhweb.rti.org/> and from studies from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found online at www.cdc.gov/.