

Safe Medication Drop Box Program Expanded Throughout Tompkins County

The Coalition for Safe Medication Disposal has announced that its “Med Return” Drop Box program, initiated last September, is now expanded to nine locations in Tompkins County, making it even easier for people to safely and securely dispose of expired or unneeded household medications.

The first “Med Return” drop box, located at the Tompkins County Sheriff’s Office, located at the County Public Safety Building on Warren Road, has received heavy use since it was installed last September. Now boxes are available, as well, at eight other secure locations around the county.

“With nine drop boxes open year-round throughout the county, disposing of unwanted household medications is now easier than ever,” notes Ed Gottlieb, pre-treatment coordinator at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility, and chair of the Coalition, which has sponsored drug take-back events each year. “Please make clearing out your medicine cabinet a regular activity!”

“Med Return” drop boxes are now available at the following locations (Hours are subject to change):

- Tompkins County Sheriff, Public Safety Building, 779 Warren Rd., Ithaca (24 hours a day, 7 days a week.)
- Ithaca Police Department, 120 E. Clinton St., Ithaca (M-F, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- Cayuga Heights Police Department, 876 Hanshaw Rd., Ithaca (M-F, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)
- Groton Police Department 108 E. Cortland St., Groton (M,W,F, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., or by appointment)
- Trumansburg Police Department, 5 Elm St., Trumansburg (M-F, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., or by appointment)
- Cornell University Police Department, G2 Barton Hall Ithaca (24 hours a day, 7 days a week.)
- Tompkins Cortland Community College Campus Police, 170 North St. (main building Room 118), Dryden (M-Sat., 7 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sun. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.)
- Tompkins County Department of Probation, Human Services Building, 320 W. MLK/State St., Ithaca (By appointment only—call 274-5367)
- Dryden Police Department, 16 South St., Dryden (M-F, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., or by appointment)

Locations and hours, along with disposal guidelines, also are posted at the Coalition’s web page at www.healthyyouth.org, and the information is available by calling 2-1-1. What can and cannot be placed in the box is also posted at each drop box location.

Gottlieb also reports that the Coalition’s most recent local take-back event April 27 was another big success. “At the two collection locations, a total of 493 people participated, half for the first time, dropped off 915 pounds of outdated or otherwise unwanted medications. For comparison, Staten Island was happy to more than double their previous record. With six locations they took in a total of about 384 pounds,” he notes.

“Prescription medications in the home are a major risk for accidental poisonings and are the primary source for the drugs most commonly abused by teens,” Gottlieb adds. “The medications collected for safe disposal can no longer contribute to these problems. By removing these medications from our homes, I think we have likely prevented at least one overdose or kept one teen from dangerously experimenting with drug abuse. The collected medications will also never become a contaminant of our waterways or water supply. As the Pretreatment Coordinator at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility, this was my initial motivation to get involved in this effort. I am thrilled to see how responsive the community has been to the cause of safely disposing of unwanted medications.”