


National Drug Take Back Day gives area residents a chance to drop off unused, old drugs

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By Wes Bowers

Record Staff Writer

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STOCKTON — On Saturday morning, some Stockton residents began their day by cleaning out their medicine cabinets and taking their old or unused medications to various locations in the city for proper disposal.

"I don't want to drop them in the toilet. You just can't do that," Louie Aguilar said after he emptied a small paper bag of expired medications into a bin outside the Arnold Rue Community Center on Saturday.

"(Dumping old drugs in the toilet is) not good for the environment, and we need to look out for it," Aguilar said.

The bin was placed by the city of Stockton as part of National Drug Take Back Day in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Agency and the California Product Stewardship Council.

Aguilar said the medications he was disposing of Saturday were a few years old, and explained he and his wife were using less of the prescriptions than were being ordered.

"We get new bottles of medication every few months," he said. "And as they keep coming, we just open the new bottles. Unfortunately, we forget about the previous one, so they kind of just keep piling up."

Aguilar said he brought his old medications to the drop-off site because he knew city officials and the DEA would dispose of them properly.

For Catherine Bender, disposing of old and unused medications was a matter of safety. She said she lives with her grandchildren and didn't want them finding materials that could be dangerous for them.

Year-round medication/sharps drop-off sites

STOCKTON

- Household Hazardous Waste Facility, 7850 RA Bridgeford St.
- El Dorado Drug Store, 2005 E. Mariposa Road
- Community Medical Center, 701 E. Channel St.

- Community Medical Center, 1031 Waterloo Road
- Angkor Pharmacy, 4555 N. Pershing Ave., Suite 7
- Stockton Police Department (Medications only), 22 E. Market St.
- Rx Express, 711 E. Market St.

TRACY

- Tracy Police Department, 1000 Civic Center Drive
- Grant Line Pharmacy, Inc., 2160 W. Grant Line Road
- Abala Pharmacy, 550-B W. Eaton Ave.
- Reich's Pharmacy, 39 W. 10th St.

MANTECA

- Manteca Police Department, 1001 W. Center St.
- Community Medical Center, 200 Cottage Ave.

ESCALON

- Vineyard Pharmacy & Gifts, 1900 McHenry Ave.
- Escalon Police Department, 2040 McHenry Ave.

LOCKEFORD

- Lockeford Drug, 14090 E. Highway 88
- Young's Payless IGA Markets, (Sharps only), 18980 N. Highway 88

LODI

- Fairmont Pharmacy, 1121 W. Vine St.
- Lodi Police Department, 215 W. Elm St.
- Community Medical Center, 2401 W. Turner Road

RIPON

- Ripon Police Department, 259 N. Wilma Ave.

"I really hate keeping old medications or medications I can't take anymore," she said. "So I go through the house twice a year, and I love having a place I can go that doesn't harm the environment."

Grace Smith, acting program manager for the city of Stockton, said Saturday's takeback was the 13th event the city had participated in since 2012.

There is typically a takeback event in April and October of each year, and Smith said the number of people bringing their expired medications has declined over time.

"What we have found is that San Joaquin County has started to install medication kiosks in various places," she said. "Some take prescriptions and some take sharps, and the goal is to have them placed in areas where they will definitely be used."

The kiosks — which look like giant red mailboxes, she said, have been installed at police departments, community centers and pharmacies, as well as at the San Joaquin County Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

With more kiosks being installed across the county for year-round use, Smith said the need to hold drop-off events has decreased as well.

"With these events, our message is that we have to be focused on safety," she said. "We have to make sure some materials are handled properly. The focus is to help people get rid of their medications and sharps."

Because of the increase in drop-off kiosks, Smith said Saturday's drop-off at Arnold Rue Community Center was the last.

Other drop-off events were held by the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office at Lincoln Center and Garden Acres Community Center, and in Lockeford.

Lathrop Police Services also held a drop-off at Mossdale Landing Community Park, and the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office held two, one in Valley Springs and one in Angels Camp.

Contact reporter Wes Bowers at (209) 546-8258, or wbowers@recordnet.com. Follow him on Twitter [@WesBo26](https://twitter.com/WesBo26).
