Free, anonymous service helps public prevent pill abuse, theft of potentially dangerous unused and unwanted prescription drugs

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WASHINGTON – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Lawrence S. "Larry" Roberts today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Justice Services (OJS) is once again partnering with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, which will take place on Saturday, October 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. local time. OJS is working with tribal law enforcement agencies to implement Take-Back Day in their jurisdictions.

"By working with the DEA and the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day initiative, we can help reduce the dangers in Indian Country from the misuse and abuse of expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs," Roberts said. "I want to thank the DEA for continuing with this important initiative and our tribal law enforcement partners for joining with us to protect lives. I encourage all members of the tribal public to bring their expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs to their nearest participating Indian Country location and help prevent the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse in their communities."

This is the 12th year that OJS has partnered with the DEA for National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. The free service allows members of the public to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. (The DEA cannot accept liquids or needles or sharps, only pills or patches.) In addition to being free, the service is also anonymous with no questions asked.

Members of the tribal public should bring their pills for disposal to the nearest receiving tribal entity listed on the table of participating Indian Country locations. They can also find the site nearest them by visiting the DEA Diversion Control Division's site search web page.

Last April, Americans turned in 447 tons (over 893,000 pounds) of prescription drugs at almost 5,400 sites operated by the DEA and more than 4,200 of its state and local law enforcement partners. Overall, in its 11 previous Take-Back events, DEA and its partners have taken in over 6.4 million pounds – about 3,200 tons – of pills.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day 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 United States 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.

For more information about National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, the October 22 Take-Back Day event, or to find the nearest collection site, visit the DEA Diversion Control Division's website at https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html.

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