Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Gil Kerlikowske and the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced that on Saturday, October 29, 2011, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. local time, Americans will be able to drop off their expired, unused and unwanted prescription drug pills at sites across Indian Country free of charge, no questions asked. By doing so, they will be helping prevent drug abuse and theft.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is partnering with national, state, local and tribal law enforcement officials, as well as community coalition groups to hold a third National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. This one-day event will make it convenient for the public to rid their homes of potentially dangerous prescription drugs.

“Prescription drug abuse is one of the fastest-growing drug problems in the country,” said Kerlikowske. “Data show that 70 percent of the people who abuse prescription drugs get them from the medicine cabinets of friends or family members, which is why properly disposing of unwanted prescription drugs is more important than ever. Together, we can help save lives by promoting the proper disposal of unused prescription drugs.”

“Through the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, we can all help to ensure the safety of loved ones and tribal communities,” Echo Hawk said. “I urge everyone who has unused prescription drugs to turn them in and help us continue to make every Indian home a prescription drug-safe home.”

The public can find a nearby collection site by visiting www.dea.gov and clicking the “Got Drugs?” banner, which links to a database where they can enter their zip code. Information can also be found by visiting http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/. Below this press release is the table of PARTICIPATING INDIAN COUNTRY LOCATIONS.

The two previous National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day events turned in more than 309 tons of pills at more than 5,300 sites manned by over 3,800 federal, state and local law enforcement partners.

Unattended or outdated prescription drugs are often found in home medicine cabinets, and create a public health crisis because they are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse. Prescription drug abuse in the U.S. today is at an alarmingly high level—two-and-a-half times more people currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants combined, according to the recently released 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The same study shows that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

Four days after the first Take-Back event in September 2010, Congress passed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow an “ultimate user” of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the Attorney General to accept them. The Act also allows the Attorney General to

authorize long term care facilities to dispose of their residents' controlled substances in certain instances. DEA has begun drafting regulations to implement the Act, a process that can take as long as 24 months. Until new regulations are in place, law enforcement agencies like the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) and the DEA will continue to hold prescription drug take-back events every few months.

Prescription drug disposal and the Take-Back events are significant pieces of the White House's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan released this year by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Purging home medicine cabinets of neglected drugs is one of four strategies for reducing prescription drug abuse and diversion laid out in Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis. The other strategies include education of health care providers, patients, parents and youth; establishing prescription drug monitoring programs in all states; and increased enforcement to address doctor shopping and pill mills.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs discharges the duties of the Secretary of the Interior with the authority and direct responsibility to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with the nation's federally recognized tribes, advocate policies that support Indian self-determination, protect and preserve Indian trust assets, and administer a wide array of laws, regulations and functions relating to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, tribal members and individual trust beneficiaries. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education. The BIA Office of Justice Services is responsible for managing the Bureau's law enforcement, corrections and tribal courts programs, either directly in tribal communities or by funding tribally administered programs through contract and grants. For more information, visit www.indianaffairs.gov.

U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY

OCTOBER 29, 2011

PARTICIPATING INDIAN COUNTRY LOCATIONS

For More Information: http://www.justice.gov/dea/take-back/takeback-day.htm