

Board of County Commissioners

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Carroll County Government

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Don't rush to flush!

County to launch program to keep prescription drugs from polluting water

September 24, 2009 – The Board of County Commissioners today announced a new program to keep prescription medication from polluting area waterways. Beginning Oct. 24, the Prescription Medication Disposal Program will allow residents to drop off expired or unwanted medication at specified collection points.

Medicine that is poured down a drain or flushed ends up in waterways and drinking water. Wastewater treatment plants cannot remove the chemicals. Even those thrown in the trash can leach into water supplies. In recent years, studies have found antibiotics, hormones, antidepressants and pain relievers in waterways across the nation. It is believed that these chemicals have caused mutations in fish and other wildlife.

Instead of disposing of medicine in the trash or down the drain, Carroll County residents are encouraged to take their expired and unwanted prescriptions to one of several year-round collection points. Carroll County's initiative is believed to be the first year-round collection program. A partnership with area law enforcement agencies, this effort has been approved by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. It was initiated by the Department of Citizen Services and will be overseen by the Carroll County Sheriff's Office. Law enforcement officers will ensure the medicine is incinerated.

To launch the program, a temporary collection site will be set up during the Recycling Office's next Household Hazardous Waste collection event. From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, residents can bring their unused prescriptions to the county's Maintenance Facility at 1250 Old Meadow Branch Road, north of Westminster (off Route 97). After the kick-off event, residents can take their prescription medications to one of four police stations: the Westminster Police Department at 36 Locust St.; the Taneytown Police Department at 120 E. Baltimore St.; the Sykesville Police Department at 7547 Main St.; and Greenmount Satellite Office of the Carroll County Sheriff's Office at 2255 Hanover Pike.

The program **only** accepts expired or unwanted prescription medication. Over-the-counter drugs and medical equipment, such as needles, cannot be accepted. For more information, contact Jolene Sullivan at 410-386-3600 or email her at jsullivan@ccg.carr.org.

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CARROLL COUNTY

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