



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Dozens deliver drugs for proper disposal during U.S. DEA, MWRD collection

Dozens of Cook County residents stopped by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) North Side, Stickney and Calumet Water Reclamation Plants recently to drop off unwanted or expired medications. The MWRD served as a collection site for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's (U.S. DEA's) National Take Back Day and collected enough pharmaceuticals to fill 10 – 30 pound bags which will be properly disposed of in an environmentally-friendly manner.

“Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to remove pharmaceuticals,” said MWRD Commissioner Kathleen Therese Meany, chairman of the Board's Public Information and Education Committee. “Because of this, the chemicals could wind up in our streams and waterways and have a negative impact on both aquatic and human life.”

There are many ways to reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals before they enter the wastewater treatment facilities. The first is to complete the course of treatment as prescribed by the physician. For over-the-counter products, store them in one location at home to prevent the purchase of additional or extras.

Once the pharmaceuticals are in your home, never pour them down the toilet or drain and never give or sell them to others.

To help educate the public, the MWRD has a supply of brochures produced by the Water Environment Federation available for community meetings and public spaces. Please call (312) 751-6633 to request a supply. In addition, the MWRD will be hosting additional pharmaceutical collection events throughout the year and is working to possibly set up permanent collection sites.

“The District is very committed to helping the public properly dispose of their medications, so we have been meeting with the U.S. DEA to pursue the establishment of a 24 hours per day, seven days per week collection,” said Commissioner Meany.

For more information about pharmaceuticals in the waterways or to find out more about proper disposal of medical and hazardous wastes, visit www.epa.gov/ppcp and www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm.

Our Water Environment... Take It Personally