



**U. S. Department of Justice**  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
80 Mulberry Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

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[www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

September 3, 2009

Dear Chief:

I would like to take this opportunity to advise you of a new and exciting initiative that will be launched on Saturday, November 14, 2009, called "Operation Medicine Cabinet."

Several New Jersey county prescription drug abuse task forces and focus groups have recognized the need for an efficient, secure, and environmentally sound method to collect and dispose of unused, unwanted, and expired medicine. The Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have joined together in an effort to educate New Jersey about the dangers of prescription drug abuse and the easy accessibility of these drugs.

"Operation Medicine Cabinet," will afford New Jersey residents the opportunity to rid their medicine cabinets of their unused, unwanted, and expired medicine. More than 70% of people who abuse prescription painkillers say they get them from family or friends (Monitoring the Future, University of Michigan, 2007). Usually this occurs without the knowledge and consent of the patient to whom the medication was prescribed.

On Saturday, November 14, 2009, from 10am-2pm, "Operation Medicine Cabinet," *The Day to Get Rid of Your Unused, Unwanted, and Expired Medicine* will be launched. The goal of the program is to allow the citizens of New Jersey to deliver all of their unused, unwanted, or expired medications to law enforcement officials who can, in turn, dispose of these controlled substances in a safe and non-hazardous manner, preventing these pills from falling into the hands of juveniles or into the illicit market in our communities.

The centerpiece of the campaign will involve a cooperative effort with several organizations, such as the New Jersey Pharmacists Association, where over 750 local pharmacies have agreed to distribute pharmacy bags promoting the "Operation Medicine Cabinet" campaign. In addition, the largest prevention organization in the state, the New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN), has advised us that all 21 county prevention groups will support and participate with this effort.

The campaign will include public service announcements and other promotions. Web banners will also be created and distributed to every Police Chief, Mayor, and Board of Education to include on their local websites. We are currently developing the program's website, [www.operationmedicinescabinetnj.com](http://www.operationmedicinescabinetnj.com), which will identify participating police departments, collection sites, and other program information. Your local prevention and treatment organizations may be contacting you to lend their support for this initiative.

I encourage your police department to participate in this event by hosting a collection site. We will provide materials to make the event a huge success and foster effective outreach in your community. Police departments wishing to participate will be listed on the program's website to inform the public of collection locations and program information. We will provide you with containers for the collection of medications and protocols for the event. You will also receive a sample press release that can be personalized and distributed to local newspapers. Community signs identifying your department as a collection site will also be provided. You can establish collection points at a location of your choice, such as the town hall, public library, or a shopping center. In order for this to be successful, the disposers should remain anonymous.

The transfer and disposal of end-user pharmaceutical controlled substances is problematic in many areas. First and foremost, we must ensure that these products are not diverted to an unauthorized user or the illicit market. The legal requirements for this are promulgated in Title 21 C.F.R 1307.21, which provides a procedure for the DEA Special Agent in Charge to grant approval to law enforcement agencies to operate "take-back" programs. Basically, the products must be turned over to a law enforcement officer, who will follow their agency's drug evidence procedures. As you can imagine, a statewide program is a huge logistical challenge. However, conducting such a program on different days in different communities may create other legal issues.

I am asking for your support and the participation of your agency in this important endeavor. I have asked the County Prosecutor to host your county's law enforcement collection point on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10am to 2pm. On that day, one of your police officers would bring the collection containers to DEA personnel stationed at the Prosecutor's Office. DEA will be responsible for the documentation and destruction of all the surrendered products.

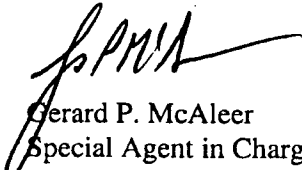
This is the first time in the United States that a statewide program will be launched. New Jersey will be on the cutting edge and this will provide other states with the model for this important program.

I am sure that you can see value of this initiative. Public awareness of the problem of pharmaceutical drug abuse is worth the effort. Keeping medications out of the wrong hands will help to keep our families stronger and our communities safer.

I urge you to go to the website, [www.operationmedicynecabinetnj.com](http://www.operationmedicynecabinetnj.com), for more information. The site will be available on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Please feel free to call me at 973-776-1200 or email me at [Gerard.P.McAleer@usdoj.gov](mailto:Gerard.P.McAleer@usdoj.gov) if you have any questions.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Gerard P. McAleer  
Special Agent in Charge

Enclosure

# Operation Medicine Cabinet Response Form



\_\_\_\_ Yes, my police department will be participating.

Please fax this response form to 973-467-2188 by Monday, Sept 14, 2009

Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

Police Chief: \_\_\_\_\_

Operation Medicine Cabinet Collection Site:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number for Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Contact : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_