



News Release

Contact:

Cheryl Wittke – Safe Communities Director: (608) 256-6713 or cwittke@safercommunity.net

Mae Knowles – Safe Communities: (608) 206-2850 or maeknowles@charter.net

Sgt. Troy Hellenbrand – Middleton Police Dept: (608) 824-7300 thellenbrand@ci.middleton.wi.us

Middleton Residents Urged to Spring Clean their Medicine Cabinets

Safe Communities program adds six new boxes in time for National Prescription Take Back Day – April 28

As of April 28, Dane County residents will have 10 locations to get rid of potentially dangerous expired, unused or unwanted medicine. Poisoning deaths are now Dane County's number one cause of injury-related death, killing more Dane County residents than automobile crashes. Pain medications, when used incorrectly, can be especially fatal.

The City of Madison-Dane County Poison Summit that met in January identified expanding access to MedDrop boxes as a key strategy to reduce access to drugs. "I'm glad to see such swift action on one of the summit's key strategies," says Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "This expansion means every citizen is just minutes from a MedDrop location," says Parisi.

The Middleton MedDrop box, which opened in November 2010, is located at the Middleton Police Department, 7341 Donna Drive. The box is open year round, and is available 24 hours in the lobby.

Safe Communities' MedDrop boxes offer residents a year-round place to get rid of unwanted medicines. "We are pleased to be able to partner to offer a solution for what's become a both a public safety and public health issue," says Middleton Police Chief Brad Keil. "Mark your calendar for April 28th and make a point to clean out your medicine cabinet and bring it to MedDrop."

"Forgotten medications can be especially dangerous," says Cheryl Wittke, Executive Director of Safe Communities. "We urge everyone to clean out all places they store medications – bathroom medicine cabinets, closets, night stands, and kitchen cupboards.

"Deaths and hospitalizations from heroin are grabbing headlines, but prescription medicines are responsible for nearly half a million emergency room visits a year," says Wittke. Other findings in a recent Public Health-Madison and Dane County report:

- Two thirds of all poisonings are a result of the misuse of prescription, over-the-counter and illicit drugs
- Middle-aged adults have the highest prescription painkiller overdose rates
- More than 6 % of teens (12-18 years) in Dane County reported non-medical use of prescription drugs
- Poisoning hospitalization rates were high for 15-19 year olds
- Unused medications are sometimes taken in error by older adults

All medicines collected by MedDrop are kept out of the community water stream because they are incinerated and not flushed as previously recommended.

The new Safe Communities' MedDrop boxes are located in:

- **Cambridge**
- **Deerfield**
- **Madison West District**
- **Mazomanie**
- **McFarland and**
- **Waunakee.**

MedDrop boxes are currently located at police departments in **Fitchburg, Madison East District, Middleton and Sun Prairie**. Federal regulations currently require that take back boxes be located at municipality police departments.

Directions and hours of all the MedDrop boxes are listed on the Safe Communities website:

www.safercommunity.net.

*MedDrop is a service of [Safe Communities](http://www.safercommunity.net), a local public/private partnership that sustains joint action by area agencies, businesses, and neighborhoods to **SAVE LIVES**, prevent injuries and make our community safer. For more information go to [SaferCommunity.net](http://www.SaferCommunity.net)*
