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A drop box for drugs

Palm Beach County: July 11 is Rx Drop Box Awareness Day

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Don't know where to trash the allergy medicine that expired three years ago or the antibiotic for strep throat that still has a swig left?

The [Palm Beach County](#) Substance Awareness Coalition has the place, one of 21 drop box locations inside police departments throughout [Palm Beach County](#).

The coalition has declared Thursday [Palm Beach County](#) Rx Drop Box Awareness Day, to promote the fight to keep drugs off the streets, out of the water supply and away from children.

[Palm Beach County](#) residents are invited to the North Palm Beach Police Department, 560 U.S. 1, North Palm Beach at 11 a.m., to learn about the drop box program and the prevention of prescription drug abuse from law enforcement officials and sponsoring organizations.

According to the coalition's website, seven Floridians die from prescription drug abuse every day.

[Palm Beach County](#) is no stranger to deaths from drugs. Karen Perry, executive director of NOPE, Narcotics Overdose Prevention and Education, said drug overdose is one of the leading causes of death in the county.

"Ninty percent of deaths related to drug overdose include the use of prescription drugs," Perry said.

NOPE has helped promote the event, and the organization's mission is to prevent drug overdose and bring awareness to programs like the drop boxes.

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The former chairperson of the [Palm Beach County](#) Prescription Drug Task Force is used to taking drugs off the streets. She said she remembers planning "take back" programs where people could drop off expired medications at participating pharmacies.

"PBSO would count the pills after, and the response was tremendous," Perry said.

Now, people don't have to wait for an event to dispose of their unwanted medications.

"The drop box is really a neat thing, especially in South Florida with so many elderly," she said. "The drop boxes cut down on young kids getting into expired and unused medications."

Even though the number of deaths related to drug overdose in [Palm Beach County](#) has decreased from 350 in 2009 to 243 in 2011, she said it is still an ongoing issue.

Jeff Kadel, executive director of the coalition, said the county is hosting the event to bring awareness to the boxes so people don't leave medicine in their cabinets.

He said the program has been in place for three years, but a lot of people don't know they can anonymously drop off their pills, no questions asked.

The boxes cost \$1,200 a piece and were donated by the Solid Waste Authority, he said. Each city is responsible for pick up and the proper disposal of what is dropped off.