



Saint Louis County

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

December 13, 2013

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Pharmaceutical drop boxes collect almost 650 pounds of medicine

In the ten months since they became available at area law enforcement agencies, the “Take it to the Box” medication drop off sites have collected 645.4 pounds of unused pharmaceuticals. St. Louis County’s Environmental Services Department, with the help of the Sheriff’s Office, just sent its third shipment of medications – this one weighing 248.2 pounds - to a facility in Fosston, Minnesota, where they were incinerated. St. Louis County Environmental Services set up the medication drop off sites earlier this year, with assistance from a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency grant.

Here are the specific amounts collected at each drop box location between Mid-August and end of November:

- St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office in Virginia: 73.8 pounds
- Eveleth Police Department: 10.8 pounds
- Floodwood Police Department: 44.2 pounds
- St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office in Hibbing: 69.2 pounds.
- Gilbert Police Department: 14.8 pounds
- Ely Police Department: 22.2 pounds
- Babbitt Police Department: 13.2 pounds

Medication left unused in a cabinet can lead to accidental poisonings of children and pets, or can contribute to prescription drug abuse. Meanwhile, improper disposal of medications, such as pouring them down the drain, has been linked to adverse effects on fish and wildlife.

Medications – both prescription and non-prescription – in any form from households can be dropped off anonymously at any of the Take it to the Box locations. This includes pills and capsules,

blister packs, creams and gels, inhalers, IV bags, liquids, patches, powders, sprays and vials. Unacceptable items include needles, syringes, lancets and thermometers, as well as medications from businesses. Medications may be kept in their original container. The customer's name may be crossed off if desired, but is not necessary.

Additional Take it to the Box locations are available at the Duluth/St. Louis County Public Safety Building, Hermantown Police Department and Proctor Police Department. These locations are coordinated by the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD).

For more information about proper disposal of medicine in St. Louis County, call (218) 749-9703 or visit stlouiscountymn.gov. For more information about proper disposal of medicine within WLSSD, call (218) 722-0761 or visit wlssd.com.

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Photo outline: Bags of empty plastic medicine containers reveal how much unused medicine has been turned in through St. Louis County's Take it to the Box medication drop off program. Nearly 650 pounds of pharmaceuticals have been safely disposed of since the program started earlier this year. Now that the medicine has been safely disposed of at an incinerator in Fosston, Minnesota, these plastic containers will be recycled.