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Statewide Safe Rx Drug Disposal Total

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) – Alaskans turned in 2,722.41 pounds of prescription medication during the fourth Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take Back event. The last take back day was in October of 2011; 1,877.66 pounds of prescription drugs were turned over.

Until a safe disposal process for prescription medications is established nationwide, the DEA will continue to partner with agencies, like the Alaska State Troopers, to hold Take Back Days every six months. The Alaska State Troopers would like to thank the DEA along with the Alaska National Guard Counterdrug Support Program, the U.S. Department of Justice, Anchorage PD, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Veterans Affairs, Juneau PD, Sitka PD, Petersburg PD, Valdez PD, North Pole PD, Craig PD, Skagway PD, Soldotna PD, Kenai PD and Seward PD for their efforts. Also, a special thanks to our new partner Carrs-Safeway and all of our returning partners and volunteers from across the state that stepped up to assist with the collection of medications. The event wouldn't have been possible or successful without the enormous effort put out by the volunteers and private agencies.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high--more Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Studies show that a majority of abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet.

In all, there were 38 Take Back locations in 27 communities around Alaska that participated in the event in April: Anchorage, Aniak, Bethel, Craig, Dillingham, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Emmonak, Fort Greely, Glennallen, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Kotzebue, McGrath, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Petersburg, St. Mary's, Seward, Sitka, Skagway, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Valdez and Wasilla.

To view the DEA's national release on the Prescription Drug Take Back Day, go to:
<http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr050312.html>