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# Local, state officials team up for Project Medicine Drop

BY MICHAEL MONOSTRA


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Representatives from the state and Camden County joined Cherry Hill Mayor Chuck Cahn and Cherry Hill Chief of Police Rick Del Campo last Wednesday to promote Project Medicine Drop, an initiative that will be taking place throughout New Jersey as part of National Make a Difference Day on Oct. 26.

The goal of the program is to make the public aware that they can put their unused prescription drugs in a designated, permanent drop-off box in various areas across the state. Officials then dispose of the prescriptions properly.

The Cherry Hill Police Department is one of two locations with a drop-off box in Camden County. The other one is the Haddon Heights Police Department.

National Make a Difference Day is a nationwide community service day in which people are encouraged to perform an act that helps better their local neighborhood. In New Jersey, officials are encouraging people to make use of the drop-off boxes on Oct. 26 to help fight against prescription drug abuse.

“Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic in New Jersey,” said Doug Collier, a retired drug initiative coordinator and law enforcement liaison for the state’s attorney’s office. “We find many teens, ages 12 to 25, that are going into medicine cabinets and taking these drugs.”


Collier noted that many teenagers take prescription drugs because they believe they are safer than other illegal drugs.


This has led to prescription drug abuse becoming a very large problem in New Jersey because they are so easy to access. A statistic from the New Jersey State Commission of Investigation found a trend that teens who abuse prescription drugs and become addicted end up turning to heroin use.

“There are more deaths from prescription drug overdoses than from heroin and

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cocaine combined,” said Dr. Jamil Mohsin, president of the Camden County Medical Society. “These drop-off boxes have been very unadvertised.”

Cherry Hill has developed an excellent relationship with the state as far as advertising that they have a drop-off box in the township.

“We’ve had people call the mayor’s office and ask about where they can drop off their prescriptions,” Cahn said. “It is a great initiative.”

The state’s next goal with Project Medicine Drop is to make it mobile. The state is hoping to create a unit that will travel to locations such as nursing homes and hospice centers to pick up any leftover prescriptions. Officials are hoping that as the state collects more unused prescription drugs, they can help reverse the increasing trend of prescription drug abuse.

Collier said he is encouraging all New Jersey residents to “Stop, drop and roll on,” at any drop-off box location in the state on Oct. 26.



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