

Manchester's Big Red Barrel is Ready to Use



The Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department, the Manchester Wellness Coalition and the Village of Manchester are pleased to announce that the "Big Red Barrel" is open and ready to use in the lower level hallway of the Village Hall. The Big Red Barrel Program is designed to reduce misuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs in a community by proactive collection and disposal through safe, legal and environmentally-friendly means.

The program utilizes a local "drop-off barrel" point. The barrels are permanent units located at police stations, and allow community members to properly dispose of their unused, unwanted or expired medication for free. All medication is then collected and transported by law enforcement officials, and disposed of in an environmentally safe, EPA-approved manner. The barrel was manufactured by students of the South and West Washtenaw Consortium.

Medicine abuse hurts people, and is a growing and dangerous problem in our communities. In 2007, more Michigan residents died as a direct consequence of prescription drug abuse than from motor vehicle accidents or firearms in the same year. In western Washtenaw County, 11% of middle school students have taken a prescription painkiller without a doctor's prescription. Among high school students, 1 in 20 has abused a prescription drug within the past month.

When asked how prescription narcotics were obtained for non-medical use, 70% of 12th graders said they were given to them by a friend or relative. Many kids assume it is safe to abuse medicine, because it is prescribed by a doctor, or sold in a pharmacy. But when taken in high doses or mixed with other drugs, many medications have serious and life-threatening consequences, including addiction, overdose, and progression to illegal drugs like heroin.

Improper disposal of unused medication also hurts our environment. Pharmaceuticals are present and persistent in Michigan's waters, meaning they do not easily break down. Do you have unused medications lying around at home? Do not flush any medicines! Dispose of your unused medications safely, without impacting our drinking water, with the Big Red Barrel program.

This medicine take-back program allows anyone to safely dispose of unused medications, with no questions asked. Pharmaceutically-controlled substances are accepted including, but not limited to, OxyContin, Vicodin, and Percocet. Our motto is "Don't flush, toss, share, or save for later. Use the Big Red Barrel."

There are three simple steps to the process:

1. Bring your unused, expired, or unwanted prescription or over-the-counter pills, in their original containers, to the Sheriff's Station in the lower level of the Manchester Village Office, 912 City Road. The hours for drop-off are: **8am-4:30pm M-F, and during library hours**. There will be posted instructions and supplies available there for your use. For more information, call (734) 428-8829, or visit www.vil-manchester.org.
2. Place medications in the plastic bags provided at the drop-off chute located in the hallway at the Sheriff's Station. Seal the bags and deposit in the chute. Do not place any containers with your personal information in the barrel.
3. Feel good about doing the right thing to protect our kids, and our environment!

Please note: Only solid medicines are accepted. NO SHARPS (EpiPens, hypodermics, etc.), and **NO LIQUIDS are accepted.**

The Manchester Big Red Barrel was funded through the Manchester Wellness Coalition and the Chelsea-Area Wellness Foundation as part of the Manchester Comprehensive Wellness Plan. The barrel installation, promotion and drug disposal is being done as a collaborative effort among the Chelsea, Dexter and Manchester Wellness Coalitions, the Washtenaw County Health Department, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and the Chelsea Police Department.

Submitted by the Manchester Wellness Coalition

