

Chief McGowan and DA Morrissey will dispose of your unwanted prescription drugs

If you have prescription drugs in your medicine cabinet that you no longer need, the Dover Police Department has a new drug take-back container – and you are invited to use it.

“Prescription drugs, particularly opiate-based pain pills left over from surgery, injury, even dental work, may look harmless sitting in the medicine chest, but we are finding that the opposite is true,” said Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey. “Addiction experts report that over half, and perhaps three quarters, of young people are having their first experiences with addictive opiates that were taken directly from the medicine cabinets of family or friends.”

The new secure prescription drug collection container can be found in the police lobby of the Dover Police Department.

DA Morrissey and Dover Police Chief Peter McGowan agree that getting un-used prescription drugs out of residents’ medicine cabinets is an important tool in keeping them out of circulation – and thereby preventing addictions and the crime and misery that often accompany them. Police refer to them as “diverted drugs,” and they are a significant problem in every community, according to Chief McGowan.

“It is not just our own children we need to be concerned about,” Chief McGowan said. “When friends visit with our children or even grandchildren and excuse themselves to the restroom, they are alone behind that closed door with whatever may be in the medicine cabinet. Thefts happen.”

Parents of teens often monitor liquor in their home, but McGowan and Morrissey said that few parents keep track of how many unused pills are in the house. “That is proving to be a mistake for many good families,” Morrissey said.

In May, District Attorney Morrissey wrote to Norfolk County police chiefs inviting them to host a drug collection container. Morrissey negotiated an arrangement with Bay State Community Services’ Impact Quincy program to provide a two-thirds subsidy for police to acquire the \$900 secure containers. Morrissey awarded 13 towns \$300 grants from the DA’s office, drawn from drug profits confiscated in narcotics prosecutions, coupled with a \$300 grant from anti-drug funds that Impact Quincy had through the Department of Public Health.

Dover and Stoughton police applied after the Impact Quincy funds had expired, so District Attorney Morrissey agreed to split the cost of the containers evenly with those towns.

With the Food and Drug Administration recommending against flushing unused medicine down the toilet or disposing of it in household trash, for environmental and other reasons, these containers provide a safe avenue of disposal, Morrissey and McGowan agreed.

District Attorney Morrissey contacted Covanta Energy and arranged for Norfolk County departments to be able to have drugs collected in the bins destroyed by that company at no cost to the town. “We are thankful to Covanta for their good corporate citizenship here,” Morrissey said.

“The container is self-serve and there is no paperwork or questions involved - it is as easy as returning a library book in a drop box,” Chief McGowans said. “Taking a few minutes out of your week to safely dispose of un-used prescriptions, particularly pain pills, might save someone a lifetime of addiction and its consequences.”