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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TOWN OF EASTHAM
October 29, 2011

DEA National Drug Take Back Initiative

National Program:

On October 29, 2011 the United States Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration will coordinate a collaborative effort with state and local law enforcement agencies to once again remove potentially dangerous controlled substances from our nation's medicine cabinets and Eastham Police will be participating locally. Collection activities will take place from 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. at the **Eastham Police Department** along with other sites established throughout the country.

The National Take-Back Day provides an opportunity for the public to surrender expired, unwanted, or unused pharmaceutical controlled substances and other medications for destruction. These drugs are a potential source of supply for illegal use and an unacceptable risk to public health and safety.

This one-day effort is intended to bring national focus to the issue of increasing pharmaceutical controlled substance abuse.

- The program is anonymous.
- Prescription and over the counter solid dosage medications, i.e. tablets and capsules accepted.
- Intra-venous solutions, injectables, and needles **will not be accepted.**
- Illicit substances such as marijuana or methamphetamine are not a part of this initiative.

What does this mean on Cape Cod:

This first of a kind initiative waves the hazardous waste classification of pharmaceuticals and removes the requirement to inventory every individual prescription medication pill that comes into collections - saving untold hours of paperwork and thousands of dollars in manpower and destruction fees.

With the exception of these special DEA sponsored events, all pharmaceutical collections held in Massachusetts are governed by state and federal law that requires medications be turned over to a law enforcement agency **AND** that every collection have at least one pharmacist on staff to inventory every single pill that comes in to the collection. All pills must be categorized as 1.) over-the-counter, 2.) prescription non-hazardous waste, or 3.) prescription hazardous waste. Prescription medications must then be transported to a destruction facility, and those classified as hazwaste must be destroyed by a licensed disposal company.

The importance of this one-time DEA waiver cannot be overstated. The October 29 event will be the simplest, least expensive way for conducting a pharmaceutical take back program ever. An additional savings will be recognized by Cape Cod communities serviced by Covanta (the waste to energy trash incinerating company), as Covanta has offered free destruction of all medications collected.

Impact of a Community Wide Take-Back Initiative:

Several Cape Cod towns like **EASTHAM** have registered with the DEA to participate in the program. Those communities that are participating will be serving both the **PUBLIC SAFETY** and **PUBLIC HEALTH** needs of the community.

Public Safety: The effects of unwanted medication falling in to the wrong hands are well documented. The danger of leaving unused medications in private homes attracts individuals to commit Burglaries and larcenies, and makes highly addictive and destructive substances readily available to children and addicts.

Public Health: The traditional practice of flushing unwanted medications down the toilet has led to pharmaceutical contamination of groundwater and drinking water. In the past two years Barnstable County and local health departments have been pushing to educate the public on safe unwanted medication disposal. The “Crush It, Don’t Flush It” campaign urges individuals to place their unwanted medications in an unusable form into the collection point receptacle rather than flushing their medications. The April 30th take-back initiative provides an effective means to dispose of medication.

For further information:

More information on the Town of Eastham October 29, 2011 Drug Take back Program can be found by contacting the **EASTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT at 508-255-0551**. Additional information on the “Crush It, Don’t Flush It” initiative is available through your local health department, or the Barnstable County Household Hazardous Waste program at 800-319-2783.