

Turn in Old or Unwanted Medications on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Covanta partners with law enforcement to help protect the public and the environment

MORRISTOWN, N.J., April 26, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Improper disposal of old, unused medications can cause lasting damage to ecosystems when the drugs end up in landfills or in water systems. Worse yet, storing unused medications in homes can contribute to the growing drug crisis in America—80 percent of heroin users begin their addiction with prescription opioids, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

To combat these critical public health and environmental problems, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) holds a twice-annual [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#), with the next event scheduled for Saturday, April 27. The event gives residents from coast to coast an opportunity to turn in pharmaceuticals at designated locations within their communities, with the assurance that the medications will be properly handled and destroyed. To find participating locations visit takebackday.dea.gov.

In support of national efforts to alleviate these issues, Covanta developed the [Prescription for Safety Program](#) (Rx4Safety) to provide safe disposal of medications collected at community-sponsored, drug take-back programs. Officers securely transport collected pharmaceuticals to a Covanta Energy-from-Waste facility, where they are safely destroyed in a combustion chamber equipped with state-of-the-art air emissions control equipment, safeguarding the environment.

By properly destroying medication, Covanta ensures the drugs do not end up in drinking water and waterways. Typical waste water treatment plants are not designed to remove drugs from drinking water and according to nationwide testing by the United States Geological Survey, over 80 percent of waterways show traces of pharmaceuticals.

"Proper handling of old or unused medication is a crucial step in protecting our children from potential drug abuse and avoiding harm to our environment," said Paul Stauder, president of Covanta Environmental Solutions. "We are proud to participate with the DEA and local police departments on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. It's days like this that put a spotlight on the mishandling of drugs and the importance of proper disposal."

In addition to participating in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day twice a year, Covanta Environmental Solutions is working in several states to provide long-term solutions to this serious health and environmental threat. The company offers convenient year-round collection [services](#) for communities, such as a partnership with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to install secure kiosks at hundreds of retail pharmacies in New York State.

Since 2010, Covanta has successfully disposed of more than five million pounds of unused prescription medicines, generating enough renewable electricity (~1,375,000 kWh) to supply 128 homes with power for a year.

About Covanta Environmental Solutions

Covanta Environmental Solutions, a subsidiary of Covanta (NYSE: CVA), offers comprehensive industrial material management services to companies seeking solutions to some of today's most complex environmental challenges. With a nationwide network of treatment, recycling and Energy-from-Waste facilities, Covanta Environmental Solutions enables customers to mitigate risk and reach their sustainability goals. For more information, visit covantaes.com.

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