

Covanta Assists Local Connecticut Law Enforcement on National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

BRISTOL, Conn., May 13, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- A [recent national study](#) found that over half of Americans do not know what to do with their old medications. To combat this alarming fact, Covanta, a state leader in sustainable waste disposal partnered with local law enforcement in Bristol, West Hartford, Meriden and Berlin, Connecticut to collect unwanted and expired medications in honor of the DEA's [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#). The four events collected 7,260lbs of material. Overall, the state collected 21 tons of medication, which Covanta also assisted in destroying.

The four take back events gave Connecticut residents an opportunity to turn in pharmaceuticals at designated locations within their communities, with the assurance that the medications will be properly handled and destroyed. After these collection events, officers securely transport collected pharmaceuticals to one of Covanta's waste-to-energy facilities in Bristol or Preston, where they are safely destroyed in a combustion chamber equipped with state-of-the-art air emissions control equipment, safeguarding the environment. The company's environmental services division, Covanta Environmental Solutions, also distributed mail-back envelopes to the public for future use. This is a convenient, year-round way to mail back unwanted medications to a DEA licensed Covanta location for proper [disposal](#).

"Proper handling of old or unused medication is a crucial step in protecting children from potential drug abuse and avoiding harm to our environment," said Ben Gassaway, area asset manager for Covanta. "These events put a much-needed spotlight on the dangers of keeping expired or unwanted medications in the home while also educating people on how to safely get rid of prescription drugs. We're proud to partner with local law enforcement and have our waste-to-energy facilities play a critical role in this very important initiative."

The improper disposal of old, unused medications can cause adverse effects to ecosystems because drugs thrown in the trash often end up in landfills or if they are flushed down the toilet, they can leach into water systems. In addition, storing unnecessary medications in homes can give the most vulnerable easy access to potentially addictive medication. In fact, 80 percent of heroin users begin their addiction with prescription opioids, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

"The Bristol Police Department would like to extend its thanks all those who turned out for our DEA Drug take back event on Saturday, April 24, 2021," said Bristol Police Lieutenant Mark Morello. "A special thanks to those who helped make it possible: Bristol Police Youth Cadets, Officers, Covanta and Bristol Eliminating Substance Use Together (BEST)."

Covanta's modern Waste-to-Energy facilities in Bristol and Preston provide vital sustainable waste management services to the state and keep waste out of landfills, minimizing the environmental impact from the waste we generate as a society.

"The Meriden Police Department was honored to have had the opportunity to partner with Covanta during Saturday's DEA Drug Take Back Event," said Meriden Police Captain John Mennone. "Amid the opioid crisis in our communities, events like these are critical to ensuring we do all we can to keep unwanted prescription drugs out of the hands of the most vulnerable and out of the environment. The mail back envelopes donated by Covanta during Saturday's event offer our citizens yet another means to safely dispose of their unwanted medications. Thanks again to our Officer's and Covanta."

Covanta has been providing safe disposal of medications collected at community-sponsored, drug take-back programs for over ten years, working with local and federal law enforcement. The program has since evolved with Covanta Environmental Solutions providing more convenient disposal operations such as drop-off kiosks and mail back envelopes to pharmacies and other locations across the United States. Learn more about these year-round services at: <https://www.covanta.com/how-we-can-help/solutions/pharmaceutical-waste>

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 Waste-to-Energy facilities, Covanta Environmental Solutions enables customers to mitigate risk and reach their sustainability goals. For more information, visit covantaes.com.

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