

Sandpoint Police Department
Idaho Conservation League
Bonner General Hospital Foundation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SANDPOINT, Idaho – The health of our community, the protection of our environment and the safety of our citizens is the driving force behind the Drug Drop Off Program being implemented by the Sandpoint Police Department, Idaho Conservation League and Bonner General Hospital Foundation.

Beginning on Friday, Aug. 19, and continuing Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. the public can take expired or no longer needed prescription medications to the police station at 1123 Lake Street in Sandpoint for safe disposal.

“Pharmaceutical theft is a huge problem in Sandpoint,” said Sandpoint Police Chief Mark Lockwood. “Too often prescription drugs, particularly opiate pain relievers such as codeine and hydrocodone, are accessible to our youth in their parent’s or grandparent’s medicine cabinets.”

Lockwood said that the partnership between the three organizations was a forward thinking collaboration that spells a win-win for the community and the environment.

Only law enforcement agencies can accept prescription drugs from the public. Individuals should remove any personal information on the bottles using a permanent marker before bringing them in.

This program is anonymous and donors will not be questioned. The officer on duty will oversee disposal into a secure bin.

“The last thing we want is for people to flush these drugs down the toilet or pour them down the sink,” said ICL Associate Susan Drumheller. “Pharmaceuticals are a growing threat to water quality in North Idaho and across the nation. We need to protect our lakes and rivers for future generations, and for the fish and wildlife that also call Bonner County home.”

Sewage treatment plants are not equipped to remove pharmaceuticals or personal care products from the wastewater, Drumheller explained. It’s not just prescription drugs we

want out of the water supply, but over-the-counter drugs should be discarded responsibly as well.

The Drug Drop Off Program does not include liquids, syringes or Epipens. Liquids should be mixed with coffee grounds, kitty litter or other undesirable substances and put into a sealed container before being put into household trash.

Bonner General Hospital's CEO, Sheryl Rickard said that the hospital is pleased to be a part of this important program. "Too often we're seeing patients in the Emergency Department that have no idea what they've ingested or what harm the drug can do to them," she said. "Teens will take a handful of pills hoping for a high and end up in a life-threatening situation instead."

Lockwood (265-1482), Drumheller (265-9565) and Kathy Hubbard (264-4029) from BGH Foundation are available to speak to school groups and service organizations. Contact one of them for dates or more information.

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