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News

Task force working to keep drugs off streets

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LORAIN COUNTY — Hundreds of pounds of pharmaceuticals were collected yesterday by the Lorain County Sheriff's Office at sites across the county to help foil crime and keep chemicals out of the environment.

Operation Medicine Cabinet, at police departments and one fire station, collected about 500 pounds of drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs, according to Lorain County Sheriff's Capt. Dennis Cavanaugh, head of the Lorain County Drug Task Force.

"It was our first time doing this," Cavanaugh said. "Judging from the success, we'll definitely continue it. Many people collected drugs from family members and neighbors for disposal. We had some very strong substances turned in, which could have been sold on the streets."

Recent years have been fraught with discarded or stolen pharmaceuticals being diverted into the street for sale and heroin traffic on the rise, according to Cavanaugh.

"From January to mid-August, we've had 19 overdose deaths in Lorain County," he said. "That's alarming to us, so we've been trying to get old narcotics out of people's homes. We also want to prevent them from getting into our water system."

Studies of drinking water in New York state have found traces of drugs, he said.

Sheriff's Capt. Jim Drozdowski was collecting drugs at the Elyria Police Department, where a blue plastic bin held candy-colored capsules, pills and tablets.

"People told us they didn't know what to do with prescriptions left after a family member died," Drozdowski said.

The drugs collected yesterday will be taken to Ross Incineration Services, in Eaton Township, to be destroyed, Cavanaugh said. The Lorain County Solid Waste District will recycle the pill bottles, he said.

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