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For Immediate Release

**Unwanted Drugs to be Collected
During National Drug Take Back Day, Saturday, October 28**

[Springfield, IL] – On October 28, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Prevention First, the Springfield Police Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will provide residents with an opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Residents are urged to bring medications for disposal to Prevention First, 2800 Montvale, Springfield, IL. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

At the Take Back event last April, the DEA reported 30 boxes (662 lbs) of unwanted pharmaceuticals were collected by the Springfield Police Department and Prevention First in four hours.

Drug Take Back Day addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. With the heroin crisis reaching epidemic proportions, removing unneeded supplies of commonly prescribed opioids such as Vicodin, oxycodone, OxyContin, and Hydrocodone from homes is a vital step to

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take in preventing abuse of these highly addictive drugs. These drugs are similar to and affect the brain the same way as heroin, especially if they are used for non-medical purposes.

Prevention is also needed as our nation is faced with unprecedented consequences of opioid misuse and addiction. According to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, in 2016 an estimated 11.8 million people misused opioids in the past year, including 11.5 million pain reliever misusers and 948,000 heroin users.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Illinois is one of 19 states that saw a statistically significant drug overdose death rate increase (7.6%) from 2014 to 2015. Provisional data from the Illinois Department of Public Health Illinois Center for Health Statistics indicates deaths from any opioid increased from **1,072** in 2013 to **1,889** in 2016.

“Reducing easy access to prescription drugs is a vital step towards keeping them out of the hands of teenagers who might misuse and abuse them,” said Karel Homrig, Executive Director of Prevention First. “This event also gives us a chance to continue to educate the public about how to prevent drug abuse before it starts.”

Those unable to travel to Prevention First's office on October 28 can visit https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/ to locate a collection site convenient to them.

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***Prevention First** is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to build community capacity to prevent substance abuse by providing training and technical assistance and raising public awareness.*