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PRESS RELEASE

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Safe Medicine Disposal Program *Operational in Santa Barbara County*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Santa Barbara County has new kiosk drop boxes at pharmacies and healthcare centers for residents to drop off unused medication at no cost. Disposal of medications in drop boxes assures medications are not misused by individuals who were not prescribed the medication and it ensures protection of the environment. Ultimately, there will be at least 25 collection locations throughout the county.

In June of 2016 the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Ordinance passed the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. This program assures that any unwanted (expired or excess) medications can be disposed of in a safe and efficient manner in our county. This new program will be operated by the Santa Barbara County Med-Project, paid for by the pharmaceutical companies that sell product here in our county, and not the tax payers.

Historically, the “Operation Medicine Cabinet” provided drop off kiosk boxes located at Santa Barbara County Sheriff sub-stations. The new program will significantly expand the number of kiosks and it will relieve law enforcement officers to focus on their primary duties. The goal is to fold the Sheriff substations into the new stewardship program

Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services (EHS) oversees this program. The program helps in the devastating opioid epidemic by getting these medications collected and destroyed responsibly. The program also ensures protection of the environment with the elimination of flushing unwanted medicines down the drain, or having them exposed to theft in the trash.

The week of March 5th, saw the implementation of this EPR ordinance, with six (6) kiosk drop boxes being installed at county pharmacies and healthcare centers. Ultimately, the ordinance calls for a “convenience standard” of five (5) collection locations in each of our five (5) supervisorial districts – so twenty-five (25) collection locations. Two websites will shortly be updated with the various locations of these kiosks throughout the county.

The link to Santa Barbara County EHS safe meds disposal page is: <http://cosb.countyofsb.org/phd/environmentalhealth.aspx?id=53031>. The link to the MED-Project (the stewardship organization tasked with implementation) website is: <https://med-project.org/locations/santa-barbara/>