

# News-Review

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## HEALTHCARE

# Medication take-back event prevents drugs from polluting Northern Michigan's waters

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## Staff reports

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The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has announced a Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Drop-Off (POD) event from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 11 at McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey.

The event is being hosted by the Harbor Springs Police Department and McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital. Everyone is welcome to drop off unwanted medications at Hospital Circle Drive off Mitchell Street during the event. Pills, liquids, ointments, lotions, and even pet medications are all accepted. Those wishing to participate should keep medications in their original containers with the medication name visible. A black marker can be used to erase personal identifying information from medication labels.

Improperly disposed of medications can cause problems for Northern Michigan's waters. When flushed down a toilet or sink, they pass through sewer and septic systems, which are not designed to treat all the substances contained in medications. This means that antibiotics, hormones, pain-relievers, and other drugs can contaminate and accumulate in our freshwater supplies. This can lead to unintentional human exposure to drugs and harm fish and other aquatic wildlife. Unwanted medications can also contribute to drug abuse and accidental poisoning.

“Properly disposing of unused medicines at the upcoming POD collection event reduces the risk that prescriptions will be mishandled and end up on the street, prevents avoidable poisoning of both children and adults, and prevents contamination of water resources,” said Jennifer McKay, policy director for Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. “This is an environmentally-safe, convenient, and free way to dispose of your unwanted and expired medications.”

This service is made possible through the cooperation of the following entities: Harbor Springs Police Department, McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Emmet County Recycling, HARBOR, Inc., and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

For those unable to attend the collection event, permanent POD Drop Boxes located at law enforcement agencies throughout Northern Michigan are available for proper disposal. Visit [www.pillsinthepod.com/locations](http://www.pillsinthepod.com/locations) to find a drug drop-off location in your area.

For questions, contact McKay at (231) 347-1181 or [info@watershedcouncil.org](mailto:info@watershedcouncil.org).