

# Antrim County gets another drug disposal box, hoping to divert meds from water

Interlochen Public Radio | By [Ellie Katz](#)

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People in Central Lake can now take advantage of a drug disposal box. Environmental groups say the boxes are an important way to divert household pharmaceuticals from waterways. *(Photo: Ellie Katz/IPR News)*

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- The Central Lake drop-off point joins others across Michigan.
  - Environmental groups say proper disposal of pharmaceuticals is crucial to protecting Michigan waterways.

- Michigan is the only state without a septic code. But that could change soon.
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A new drug disposal box is available in the lobby of the Central Lake Police Department in Antrim County.

It's a free, no-questions-asked way to dispose of pharmaceuticals, and environmental groups say it's a critical way to keep Michigan's water healthy.

Jennifer McKay is with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. She says some common methods for getting rid of household medications can harm waterways.

"The recommendation has always been to either flush medications or pour them down the sink, and people still have that in their mindset," McKay said. "A lot of times people either flush them or put them down the sink, or even if they put them in the trash, it ends up getting into landfill and leachate. And it still ends up in our water resources."

She says the science still isn't conclusive on how those pharmaceuticals in drinking water affect humans. But the verdict on how they affect aquatic species is not good.

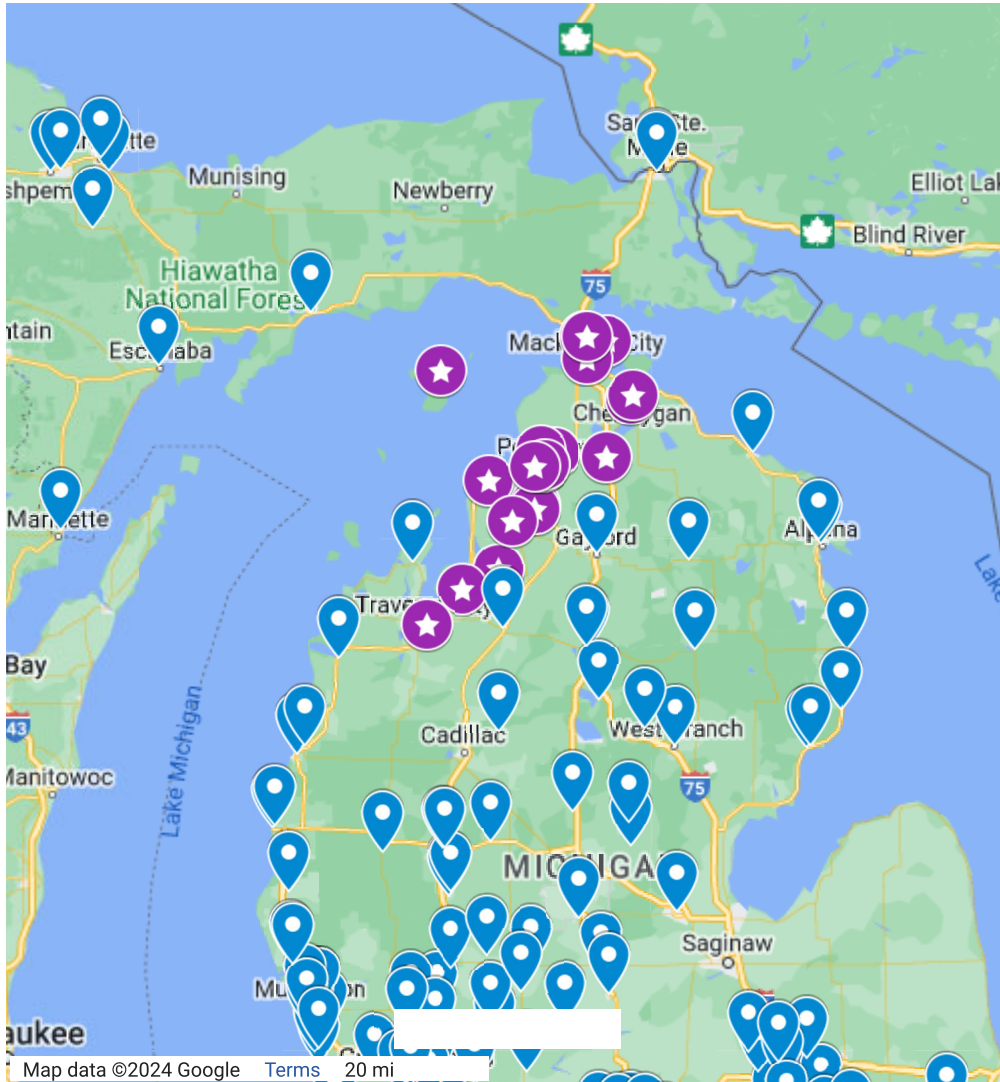
"It impacts their reproductive function, it impacts their immunity because it's a ... cocktail of medication that is mixing in the ecosystem," said McKay.

Pharmaceutical pollution also comes from the drug manufacturing process and agriculture. But disposal boxes can help divert household medications from water and soil.

The Central Lake drop box joins several others across northern Michigan as part of the [POD program](#).

## Michigan Drug Disposal Locations ☆

About



People can throw away prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and even pet medications in the form of pills, ointments, lotions and liquids.

McKay says it's an important step to take since there aren't currently regulations in place to treat water for pharmaceutical pollution.

Michigan remains the only U.S. state without a statewide septic code, but two bills in the Legislature seek to change that.

For now, McKay says disposing of drugs in designated boxes is a good way to prevent them from getting into waterways.

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Ellie Katz joined IPR in June 2023. She reports on science, conservation and the environment.

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