**For Immediate Release:**

**May 1, 2017**

**VERMONTERS DISPOSE OF MORE THAN 2.5 TONS OF UNUSED MEDICATIONS FOR NATIONAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE BACK DAY**

Montpelier, Vt. – As part of National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, Vermonters disposed of more than 2.5 tons of unused medications, including prescription opioids, on Saturday, April 29. From the 71 collection sites throughout Vermont, a total of 5,552 pounds of Vermont’s “most dangerous leftovers” were collected and will soon be destroyed.

Saturday’s collection of medications exceeded the 3,934 pounds of medication collected last October. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimates that approximately 10 percent of the medications collected on Prescription Drug Take Back Days are opioids.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is an initiative lead by the DEA in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Health and state and local law enforcement to collect and destroy unused medications, including prescription opioids. The misuse of drugs often begins at the family medicine cabinet, where prescription painkillers may be kept long after they are needed. As part of Saturday’s collection event, communities throughout Vermont hosted collection sites where people safely – and anonymously – dropped off unused medications. The sites were staffed by local and state police and county sheriff departments.

“The opioid crisis facing Vermont is a statewide problem and will require a statewide solution,” said Governor Phil Scott. “I want to thank all Vermonters who participated in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, as well as health and law enforcement professionals who contributed to this successful collection initiative. Getting prescription opioids out of family medicine cabinets and destroyed is an important part of the overall strategy to reduce the availability of opioids in Vermont.”

“Every one of the thousands of pills disposed of means there are that many fewer chances for drug misuse and addiction,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. “These efforts, together with patients talking with their doctor about alternatives to prescription opioids, and getting the fewest number of pills required for treatment when opioids are deemed necessary, will really make a difference.”

Commissioner of Public Safety Thomas D. Anderson thanked the DEA for its leadership of this program. He also thanked the Vermont State Police, the Vermont Sheriffs, local police departments, the Vermont Health Department, and area businesses that participated in and helped make National Prescription Drug Take Back Day a success.

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