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OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET YIELDS OVER HALF TON OF MATERIAL

DAVENPORT, Iowa-Operation Medicine Cabinet, a three-day event allowing residents the opportunity to safely dispose of medications, sharps, and mercury thermometers, generated over 1,200 pounds of material.

This included approximately 800 pounds of pharmaceuticals, 375 pounds of sharps, and 40 pounds of mercury thermometers. The event, which was held May 23, 24 and 25 in Eldridge, Davenport and Bettendorf respectively, served over 800 households. Operation Medicine Cabinet officials collected prescription and non-prescription medications, exchanged mercury thermometers for digital, and collected and gave out sharps containers for needles, lancets and syringes at no charge.

"It's so important that our residents know how to properly and safely dispose of these items," said Tom Ryan, Homeland Security Project Coordinator for RSVP and United Neighbors. "It was evident that a lot of what we received had been stored away for several years, such as the mercury thermometer that dated back to 1933," he said.

Although some are saving old items, studies show that many residents still flush their old

medications down the toilet, which poses risks for the groundwater supply and the environment. Instead of flushing, local officials are urging residents to use the Waste Commission of Scott County's permanent collection program for pharmaceuticals.

"Residents are now able to safely and properly dispose of old prescription and non-prescription medications through our Household Hazardous Material (HHM) program at no charge," said Brian Seals, special waste coordinator for Waste Commission of Scott County.

The Commission's HHM program currently provides sharps containers and accepts mercury-containing items free of charge from residents of Scott and Rock Island Counties. Call 563-381-1300 to schedule an appointment for disposal.

Ryan said the event was so well received this year that plans are already underway to make this an annual collection.

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