

# The Lincoln County News™

August 07, 2008

Serving Maine and Lincoln County for over a century.

Vol. 133 - No. 32

Home  
 Subscribe  
 Contact Us  
 From Fresh Maine



All Stories  
 News  
 Sports  
 Weather  
 Features  
 School News  
 Politics  
 Business Profiles

Opinion  
 Arts  
 Business  
 Community  
 Police/Sheriff  
 Courts

Calendar  
 Events & Activities  
 Fresh from the Farm  
 Real Estate  
 Bed & Breakfasts  
 Restaurants  
 Gardening  
 Local History

Professional & Financial  
 Antiques  
 Services/Help Center  
 Obituaries  
 Automotive  
 Weddings  
 Shop Online @ LCN

Email Us

## FEATURES

[Browse](#)  
[Archive](#)  
[Subscribe](#)  
[Masthead](#)

Supporting local businesses since 1986!

For business listings, local events and more,  
 visit [www.DamariscottaRegion.com](http://www.DamariscottaRegion.com)



## Drug Disposal Dilemma

Story date: 08/06/2008

By John Maguire

Accidental death, theft and pollution are the main concerns in a state wide pilot program to help citizens dispose of unused and expired prescription medications.

The program, initiated and organized by the University of Maine Center on Aging, is in its first phase in a mail-in collection program that includes Kennebec, Aroostook, Penobscot and Cumberland counties. The program is expected to be expanded into the rest of the state by fall.

"It's going unusually smoothly," said Len Kaye, a Center representative. "It's pretty easy for folks to dispose of their medication."

The free envelopes are padded, water proof and approved by the post office, he said. They are pre-addressed and postage-paid business reply envelopes. Kaye said the Center has around 300 of the envelopes that have returned.

The limited number of envelopes ("mailers") are available at participating pharmacies in the four counties. Citizens aged 65 and older are being asked to fill out a survey to send in the mailers with the medication, but no personal information will be collected, according to a Dept. of Environmental Protection newsletter.

The medication will be sent to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, where officials will collect the necessary information and dispose of the drugs. Pistell said that the medication will be sent for hazardous waste incineration, which is set at an extremely high temperature.

Aside from flushing old medication, people also throw their old or unused prescription drugs in the trash.

"We don't embrace putting the medications into the garbage," Pistell said.

She said that not all garbage ends up being burned and even if it does, it may not be at a high enough temperature.

"Pharmaceutical companies are coming up with new formulations. There are millions of computations and it would be a pretty difficult web to disentangle," she said.

The DEP doesn't have the data to prove burning medications at lower temperatures eliminates them properly. Throwing medication into the trash delays its introduction into the environment, she said.

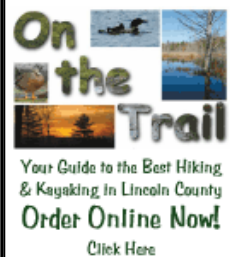
In addition to environmental concerns, human health is another major push toward establishing a fully-fledged drug elimination program. Melissa Linen of the Northern New England Poison Center said that many of the calls made relate to accidental consumption of medications by children. Children eat medication thinking that it is candy. She also said that there have been cases in which a parent accidentally gave their child the wrong medication.

The elderly also have had problems such as taking a double dose by accident. An elderly person may also mistake one medication for another.

**A.E. SAMPSON & SON, LTD.**

Wood flooring  
 from Maine's  
 rugged coast.

[CLICK HERE FOR INFO](#)



Get the Lincoln county news headlines via eMail

subscribe -->

unsubscribe -->

enter e-mail

please add your eMail address above

Click here for your banking solutions...




Schooner Cove Retirement Living at its Best

Click Here for More Information

Storm Closings & Cancellations through special arrangement with



CLICK HERE

Linen said that the NEPC has seen an increase in fatalities related to prescription medication abuse. She said that the NEPC encourages people to empty out their cabinets and dispose of unused and/or expired medications.

In addition to the mail-in pilot program set up in the four counties, Linen said there are also coordinated, one-day events around the state. In Caribou, the Police Dept. will come to a citizen's home to pick up medication.

There is not just one, fully established program in the state of Maine. There are one-day drop off events. There are isolated systems in places such as Caribou. There is this pilot program, which by fall may expand over the entire state.

"We have technical barriers, but we also have regulatory barriers," Pistell said.

Pistell said that the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency is concerned about security, particularly when narcotics are involved. Having drop-off boxes, like countries in Europe do, is not an easily attainable goal.

Kaye said that having the mailers available at pharmacies make it convenient for people picking up their medications at the same time.

"We don't have an unlimited number of mailers," he said. "We want them in locations where they will be used."

He said that the Center's program is at the point of thinking in the direction of establishing other locations to make the mailers available. Post offices, physician offices, senior centers are some of these possible future locations, he said.

Save Time! Refill Your Prescriptions On-Line



waltzpharmacy.com



Local, Organic, Delicious!

CLICK HERE

This site is owned by Lincoln County News © 2002

WEBSITE HOSTED WITH Know Technology INFORMATION PARTNERS