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Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
May 8, 2014

Contact: Jennifer Marsh
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Drop the Drugs event to launch program on Friday, May 9 at 3 p.m. Media Event in Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County, CA – Prescription medication drug abuse is a national problem that hits every local community. Each day, more than 2500 youth between the ages of 12-17 are getting high on prescription meds. Too often, opiate-based prescription abuse leads to a jump to heroin use, because it's less expensive and easier to get. Stanislaus County has been fighting back and is launching a new program to help.

What: Drop the Drugs Disposal Program Media Event. To combat the availability of unwanted, unused, or expired prescription medications throughout our community, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) is partnering with Sheriff Adam Christianson to open secured prescription drug collection boxes at five Sheriff's facilities in Stanislaus County. These boxes will be operational at the media event.

When: Friday, May 9 at 3 p.m.

Where: Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department Headquarters
250 E. Hackett Road Modesto.

Visuals: The drug box will be unveiled and a display area of past take back events.

Spokespersons:

Adam Christianson, Stanislaus County Sheriff
Madelyn Schlaepfer, PhD, Stanislaus County BHRS Director
Jeff Godfrey, Stanislaus County BHRS Prevention Consultant
Jennifer Reynolds, Recovering Prescription Drug Abuser

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Background:

In 2009, a partnership was formed between the Stanislaus County Drug Enforcement Agency and Stanislaus County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) to combat the growing trend of prescription medication diversion and abuse amongst teens and young adults throughout Stanislaus County. Through this partnership, a prescription medication take back event called "Drop the Drugs" was formed.

After hosting over 20 "Drop the Drugs" take back events in Stanislaus County over a five-year period, County staff have collected and disposed of over 8,900 pounds of prescription medications that were accumulating in homes throughout the county.

The "Drop the Drugs" Prescription Medication take back event was formed for the purposes of:

- Providing the community with information regarding the dangers of prescription medication abuse.
- Educating the community on the link between opiate prescription medication abuse (Vicodin / Hydrocodone or Oxycodone) and heroin addiction.
- The Environmental impacts surrounding improper disposal of prescription medication.

As prescription medication abuse and addiction rates rise, so does the negative community impacts associated with addiction. Statistics have shown that the number of residential burglaries and thefts, specifically targeting prescription medications, have risen in nearby communities. Some of those who have been interviewed regarding their addiction have said their main source of prescription medication was friends or family. Others have actually gone as far as visiting "Open Houses for Sale" on the weekends and stealing prescription medications from medicine cabinets.

The most common prescription medications being abused throughout the nation are opiate based medications commonly known as "Painkillers." Painkillers are readily available through legal and illegal means; however they can be very expensive. It is not uncommon for someone to make the jump from opiate based prescription medications to heroin because it is less expensive and easier to get.

The permanent collection boxes will give community members a safe and secure, year-round opportunity to dispose of prescription medications, in addition to bi-annual disposal events offered currently.

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