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**Cleveland County Health Department Encourages Residents to Lock Up Medications for
National Lock Your Meds Day**

SHELBY, NC – Friday, October 23, is observed as National Lock Your Meds Day. The Cleveland County Health Department is encouraging residents to lock up or secure prescription and over-the-counter medications to help prevent them from ending up in the wrong hands.

According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Cleveland County reported 137 emergency department visits for overdose involving medications or drugs with dependency potential in 2024.

Lock Your Meds is a national campaign created to reduce prescription drug abuse by making adults more aware of their potential to become “unwitting suppliers” to those who could abuse their medications.

Here’s how you can make a vital difference in the fight against prescription drug abuse and misuse:

- Lock Your Meds.
- Take regular inventory of your medications to make sure nothing is missing.
- Safely dispose of all unused or expired medications.
- Teach young people in your life about the dangers of taking medications that were not prescribed to them.
- Spread the word by letting friends and family members know about the dangers of unsecured prescriptions and share information about local resources.

Free medicine lock boxes are available at the front desk of the Cleveland County Health Department. Stop by and pick one up Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Do you have unused or expired medication that you would like to dispose of properly? The Cleveland County Health Department also has free home medication disposal kits to allow you to properly dispose of small quantities of medication in your home. For larger amounts of unused or expired medications, you can bring them to the medicine take-back box at the Cleveland County Health Department, or to another location near you. A listing of all medicine take-back box locations in Cleveland County is available at www.recoveryconnectcc.com.

Properly disposing of unused or expired medications is important to not only prevent them from ending up in the wrong hands, but also to protect our water systems. Standard sewage and septic systems do not filter out chemical compounds. This allows antibiotics, hormones, pain relievers, and other drugs to enter natural waterways, which contaminates rivers, lakes, and drinking water, and can potentially harm aquatic life and impact our health.

The Cleveland County Health Department encourages community members to come by the Cleveland County Health Department to pick up their free medicine lock box or home medication disposal kit and to take advantage of our county's fifteen medicine take-back box locations. We can all play a vital role in helping to prevent medication misuse, abuse and accidental overdoses.

For questions or additional information, please call us at 980-484-5100, or visit www.lockyourmeds.org/nc/.

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