

Anti-drug group offers system for safe disposal of leftover medications

By Beth N. Gray, Times Correspondent

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An environmentally friendly method to dispose of leftover or unused medications is now available for personal use — and free — through the Hernando County Community Anti-Drug Coalition.

The Detera Drug Deactivation System, a carbon compound concoction, requires the mere addition of about one cup of tap water and the pharmaceuticals to its container, followed by a swish, a locking seal and a toss into the trash for safe disposal, explained Tresa Watson, the coalition's executive director.

Utilizing molecular absorption technology, one packet can biodegrade up to 90 pills, 12 ounces of fluid or 12 medicated patches.

"The goal is to remove excessive drugs from homes and other settings before they're misused," Watson said of the initiative.

"This is so easy and can save a life should a child get hold of some potent medications," said project spokeswoman Lamar Koontz, who is spreading the word through civic and community organizations.

"A lot of people do take (unused medications) to designated disposal sites," Watson said. "A lot of households don't do anything; they just keep them. Some people flush them down the toilet or put them down the drain. That's bad for the water supply."

Throwing such products in the trash, she continued, "is bad for our landfills. It's bad for the environment."

The coalition fields calls weekly from people inquiring how to get rid of leftover prescriptions, Watson noted.

From knowledge gleaned in her anti-drug efforts, she added, "a lot of addicts get pills out of garbage cans."

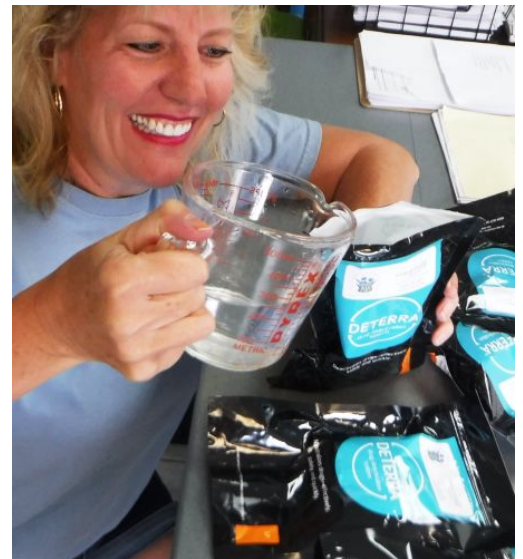
"This is win-win any way you look at," Watson said of the neutralizing system. "I'd like to saturate the market to dispose of your medications safely and properly."

In less than a month, the coalition handed out almost 250 packets provided through the Hillsborough County Anti Drug Alliance, which recently forwarded 500 more. They've gone to individuals, drug treatment centers and physicians' offices.

Watson is writing a grant request so the Hernando coalition can buy its own supply. While the packets sell for \$7 each, bulk orders are available at a negotiated price.

Free packets are available by calling the coalition at (352) 596-8000 for pickup in the office at Contemporary Plaza, 13194 Spring Hill Drive. Office hours are irregular. Arrangements may be made for home delivery.

Ongoing drop-off sites for leftover medications include Hernando County Sheriff's offices at 18900 Cortez Blvd. in Brooksville, the substation at 33070 Cortez Blvd. in Ridge Manor and at the Forest Oaks Government Center, 7499 Forest



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Tresa Watson, the executive director of the Hernando County Community Anti-Drug Coalition, demonstrates the use of the Detera Drug Deactivation System, offered free for safe disposal of unused medications.

Oaks Blvd., Spring Hill; also at the West Hernando Convenience Center, 2525 Osowaw Blvd., Spring Hill, and the Northwest Solid Waste Facility, 14450 Landfill Road, north of Brooksville. Medications delivered are destroyed by incineration.

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