



NEWS

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Paulding County Health Department unveils drug drop box to actively combat the Opioid Epidemic in Northwest Georgia

Northwest Georgia Health District: The Northwest Georgia Paulding County Health Department and the Paulding County Sheriff's Office are partnering to provide a drug drop box at the health department for disposal of old prescription drugs. The drug drop box is part of the Northwest Georgia Health District Opioid Epidemic Prevention Action Plan. The aim is to move dangerous narcotics off the street and adequately dispose of them.

“Permanent drug drop boxes can be an effective, active mechanism to remove opioids and other dangerous controlled substances from our communities and help prevent accidental overdose and deaths,” said Dr. Unini Odama, Health Director for the Georgia Department of Public Health Northwest Health District, which includes Paulding County. “Rural and urban community residents need a safe and convenient access to drug disposal options, and we believe offering this service at the health department meets that need.”

“The number one risk factor for opioid addiction is exposure to opioids before the age of eighteen,” said Paulding County Health Department Nurse Manager Donna Stanford, “and we believe having an additional, easily accessible drug drop box in our county will help minimize inadvertent exposure to drugs.”

“We recognize that opioid addiction has many manifestations and requires a multitude of preventive measures from many sources in our community,” said Paulding County Sheriff Gary Gullede. “It was very significant for the health department to step forward and partner with us to install a drug drop box in their facility. We have a drug drop box in the lobby of the jail, and it gets filled on a regular basis, so we have no doubt the new one at the health department will serve a need in the community.”

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The disposed drugs in the drop box will be picked up weekly and incinerated by the Paulding County Sheriff's Office. There is no key to the box on the health department premises.

Drug drop boxes are now located in Paulding County at:

- Paulding County Health Department, 451 Jimmy Campbell Parkway, Dallas
- Paulding County Sheriff's Office, 247 Industrial Way N, Dallas,
- Hiram City Hall. 217 Main St, Hiram

In 2017, the Northwest Health District, comprised of Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Paulding, Polk, and Walker counties, had the highest death rate by drug overdose of all Georgia public health districts. Paulding County's 2017 death rate by drug overdose was 15.7 compared to a death rate of 14.7 for the State of Georgia.*

For more information about the Paulding County Health Department's drug drop box, call 770-443-7881.

*Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), Mortality/Morbidity, Georgia Department of Public Health, Office of Health Indicators for Planning (OHIP), April 2019, <https://oasis.state.ga.us/>

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photo caption: Paulding County Health Department and Paulding County Sheriff's Office partner to operate county's third drug drop box. (l-r) Sergeant Ashley Henson, public information officer, Paulding County Sheriff's Office; Donna Stanford, nurse manager, Paulding County Health Department; Col. Chad Hunton, chief deputy, Paulding County Sheriff's office; and Nicki Ivey, nurse, Paulding County Health Department.

