

**For Immediate Release**

**April 8, 2011**

**PHOTOS ATTACHED, SEE CAPTIONS BELOW**

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**OPERATION MEDICINE DROP OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED TODAY**

**APRIL 8, 2011**

**County, Municipal Agencies, and local Environmental Non-Profit Partner for  
Safe Communities and Healthy Water**

**Berlin, MD** – Worcester County residents have an opportunity to protect our children, community and environment by participating in Operation Medicine Drop: Safe Communities-Healthy Waterways, a one day drug take back effort on April 30.

Assateague Coastal Trust/COASTKEEPER, Berlin Police Department, Worcester County Sheriff's Office and Worcester County Health Department announced the joint countywide event at a news conference today at the Atlantic Hotel in Berlin.

Operation Medicine Drop takes place from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 30 at:

- Pocomoke Health Center, 400-A Walnut Street.
- Snow Hill Health Department, 6040 Public Landing Road.
- Berlin Police Department, 10 Williams Street.
- Food Lion, Rt. 611 in West Ocean City.
- Food Lion, Manklin Creek Rd. in Ocean Pines.

Local law enforcement officers and volunteers will assist residents as they drop off their medicine for safe disposal and recycle prescription bottles at the designated drop off sites.

“We hope this event changes people’s behaviors,” said Berlin Mayor Gee Williams about keeping the potentially harmful medications out of the waterways. “Do not flush your unwanted medicine.”

Berlin Police Chief Arnold Downing and Worcester County Sheriff Reggie Mason highlighted the importance of properly disposing of medicine in order to prevent drug abuse and misuse.

“Safety is no accident,” said Katherine Gunby, Worcester County Health Department public information officer. “This is a chance for people to prevent prescriptions and over-the-counter medications from accidentally falling into the hands of small children or pets.”

Assateague COASTKEEPER Kathy Phillips, said incineration at a regulated facility, through a program like Operation Medicine Drop, is the preferred method for disposal of unused medications. “Our wastewater treatment plants cannot filter out the chemicals, and runoff water from landfills is eventually captured and flushed through our wastewater treatment plants,” explained Phillips, “so even throwing unused meds in the trash still allows these substances to reach our waterways and affect our fish populations.”

“While we obviously can't stop the introduction of some pharmaceuticals into our wastewater because of normal bodily functions, we can control what happens to medications that are not consumed,” Phillips said. “Don’t flush! Hold it until April 30.”

For more information about Operation Medicine Drop, visit <http://assateaguecoastkeeper.org> or <http://worcesterhealth.org>.

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Operation Medicine Drop is a Joint Community Effort between the Town of Berlin Police Department, The Worcester County Sheriff’s Office, the Worcester County Department of Health, and the Assateague COASTKEEPER.