

# Coalition 'takes back' 45.6 pounds of meds

## Roane County News

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According to the Tennessee Department of Health, 85,567 painkiller prescriptions were filled in Roane County in 2016.

When broken down into morphine milligram equivalents, that means enough opiates were filled in Roane County to provide every person with 183 10-milligram hydrocodone pills.

The Department of Health reports 1,631 overdose deaths in Tennessee in 2016. Thirty-two of those were in Roane County, according to the Roane County Medical Examiner's report. The Department of Health recorded 100 nonfatal overdose deaths requiring an inpatient stay in Roane County in 2015, equal to roughly one overdose in the county every three days.

It is because of statistics like these that Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition participated in the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on Oct. 28. The Coalition had 45.6 pounds of unused, expired and unwanted prescription medications brought in for safe disposal. The Kingston Police Department, Drug Enforcement Administration and Coalition's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program volunteers were on site to assist with the collection.

Seventy pounds were collected during the Harriman Police Department's take-back event. More than 15 tons of unused medications were collected statewide during the last National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day in April.

One of the ways to help fight this epidemic is to be accountable for prescriptions. Patients should count their medication so they always know how many pills they have; decrease access to prescriptions by keeping them locked up; and always dispose of unused or unwanted pills responsibly.

The Roane County Sheriff's Office and police departments in Rockwood, Harriman and Oliver Springs all have permanent disposal bins for proper disposal of medications.