

# Commentary: Project Rx keeps waterways clean

ASHLEY RHINEHART, Guest Columnist 1:01 a.m. EDT August 2, 2016



(Photo: Provided)

The Project Rx team is typically very busy this time of year; by early summer, we have usually completed one of our biannual take-back events and commenced preparation for the second. This year, in lieu of an event, we are excited to announce the installation of a new permanent drop box. This box is located within Greenville Health System's Greenville Memorial Hospital near the Upstate Pharmacy, where over-the-counter and prescription medication can be deposited freely and anonymously at any time.

The installation of this 24/7 medication drop location marks a shift for Project Rx events toward year-round collection. We have collected nearly 300 pounds of medication from our one location at Greenville Memorial since its installation in April 2016. At this pace, we could potentially collect approximately 1,800 pounds by the end of the year from our Greenville Memorial location alone.

So what impact does that have on our waterways? Think of it this way- the average compact car weighs approximately 3,300 lbs. Since our inaugural event in 2010, we have collected a total of 12,676 lbs. of medication for proper disposal – that is equivalent to almost four compact cars! In addition, we anticipate over 1,800 additional pounds to be collected this year at our drop boxes. With the help of our partners and supporters, we can achieve a new level of water quality in the Upstate by educating the community about proper medication disposal as well as provide an option that is readily available, no questions asked.

Of course, we can't see micro constituents in our waterways the same way that we would see a compact car, but the impact is real and becoming an alarming issue in the U.S. The chemicals that enter our waterways through medication flushed down the toilet can have harmful effects on wildlife, and can even find their way back into our drinking water supply. Pollutants can also enter our rivers and groundwater tables from landfills and rainwater runoff. The only way to effectively eliminate these toxins is to properly dispose of expired or unused medication through incineration, which is handled by law enforcement.

It's amazing to see the tangible impact that is made by providing year-round disposal options for the community. Our new Greenville Memorial drop box location is the second 24/7 location available; the first is at the Greenville County Law Enforcement Center, located at 4 McGee Street. We are excited to announce new partnerships in the coming months that will allow us to install additional drop boxes in our area. Stay tuned!

With Project Rx numbers growing, it's clear that Upstate residents are passionate about protecting our waterways and the people in our community. We thank you for taking simple steps to make a big impact on our environment, and we look forward to serving you! For more information about Project Rx, please visit [www.ariverremedy.org](http://www.ariverremedy.org).

*Ashley Rhinehart is the public relations coordinator for Renewable Water Resources.*

Read or Share this story: <http://grnol.co/2a19rSy>