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**TENNESSEANS DROP OFF MORE THAN 10 TONS OF PILLS DURING SPRING
TAKE-BACK EVENT**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – Tennessee collected an impressive 20,590 pounds of prescription drugs during the DEA’s 15th annual National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on April 28.

For Count It! Lock It! Drop It! those statistics continue to indicate that its efforts are paying off. CLD is a community program for prescription drug misuse that works to raise awareness about ways to keep drugs, especially opioid pain medication, out of abusers’ hands and how to properly dispose of them.

The CLD program was begun as a local initiative by the Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition, but it expanded its support training and outreach efforts to 80 counties following a \$1.3 million grant from the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation in 2016. In addition, CLD played a key role in getting a prescription drop box established in all of Tennessee’s 95 counties. With the help of organizations such as coalitions, health councils and law enforcement departments, it has distributed 148,000 campaign materials.

As part of its outreach, it has heavily promoted the DEA’s National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day encouraging people to properly dispose of unused and expired prescription pain pills along with other medications sitting around their homes.

Overall, the DEA’s Take-Back Day was a huge success, not only in Tennessee, but nationwide. A record-setting 475 tons of expired and unwanted prescription medications were collected at more than 6,000 sites across the United States.

“We couldn’t be more proud of the take-back results in Tennessee,” said Kristina Clark, CLD project manager. “This event continues to increase awareness of the need to safely dispose of unused pain medication, and we want to continue to encourage everyone to take part in helping us fight the opioid epidemic.”

Dr. Andrea Willis, senior vice president and chief medical officer for BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, says these results reinforce the Health Foundation’s decision to work with Count It! Lock It! Drop It! to help address the epidemic.

“We know firsthand the importance of confronting the opioid crisis in Tennessee,” Dr. Willis said. “It has been incredibly rewarding to work alongside CLD and help expand the program across the state. Each year, Tennesseans turn in an impressive amount of medication, and we have no doubt this is due in part to CLD’s efforts to educate the state on the dangers of prescription medication misuse.”

Tennessee has been participating in the DEA's take-back events since 2010, and more than 205,000 pounds of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted prescription pills have been collected.

About CLD

Count It! Lock It! Drop It!® (CLD) is a comprehensive community program for prescription drug misuse prevention based in Coffee County, Tenn. With support from the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation, an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association, and the community at large, the program is leading a statewide education effort to combat the misuse and abuse of prescription pain medication. According to the Tennessee Department of Health, 7,636,112 opioid prescriptions were written in 2016, and it is CLD's mission to make the community aware of the risks and dangers associated with the prescription drug misuse epidemic.

About BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation, Inc.

The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation, Inc., was established in December 2003 as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation organized to promote the philanthropic mission of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee. The foundation awards grants focused on high-impact initiatives across the state, which promote healthy lifestyle choices and help control health care costs for all Tennessee residents. Working with civic and economic partners, the foundation is dedicated to the support of research, innovative programs and creative approaches to improve the health and quality of life of Tennesseans for generations to come.

About BlueCross®

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's mission is to provide peace of mind through better health. Founded in 1945, the Chattanooga-based company is focused on serving more than 3.4 million members in Tennessee and across the country. BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Inc. is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. For more information, visit the company's website at bcbst.com.