

Office of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor

MICHAEL J. WILLIAMS
ACTING PROSECUTOR



FRANK R. CRISOLOGO
ACTING CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

PAUL T. APPROVATO
ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

Justice Center, 2nd Floor
65 Park Avenue
PO Box 756
Flemington, NJ 08822-0756

Telephone 908-788-1129
Fax 908-806-4618

www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/prosecutor.htm

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HUNTERDON COUNTY PROSECUTOR JOINS SAFE AT HOME CHALLENGE



Acting Hunterdon County Prosecutor Michael Williams and Hunterdon County Chief of Detectives Frank Crisologo announce participation in the Safe at Home Challenge, in partnership with Prevention Resources and the Safe Communities Coalition of Hunterdon & Somerset during the COVID-19 crisis.

Acting Prosecutor Williams announced that law enforcement agencies and the Prosecutor's Office are committed to preserving the quality of life in Hunterdon County by encouraging Hunterdon County residents to exercise drug safety within the home, to continue to maintain social distancing requirements, and to avoid unnecessary travel.

"A Safe Community starts in your own home."

The Safe at Home Challenge was launched by Prevention Resources and the Safe Communities Coalition of Hunterdon & Somerset in partnership with local government authorities, schools, and the local communities. The Safe at Home Challenge is designed to provide a series of Public Safety Announcements (PSA) along with preventive information and outreach on social media platforms during this pandemic.

The first of the Safe at Home Challenge PSA videos provides a series of messages on how to stay safe during the COVID-19 crisis, in addition to the safe storage and inventory of medications to prevent unintended and accidental use. See link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/HunterdonCountyProsecutor/videos/641696039741889/?t=4>

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Lesley Gabel, Co-Chief Executive Officer at Prevention Resources, announced that the Safe at Home Challenge will be rolled out in a series of PSAs providing outreach during a very difficult time when many are seeking resources and information to cope during this pandemic crisis. The Prevention Resources and Safe Communities Coalition team members were able to transition to a robust platform on social media to coordinate community and educational outreach to continue to engage our county, especially those households that may be at risk to substance misuse.

Participating in the first video is Hunterdon County Sheriff Fredrick Brown. Sheriff Brown provides a message regarding at-home drug safety and confidence schemes targeting residents to obtain their banking information as federal stimulus money is about to be delivered. Also participating in this announcement are Hunterdon County Health Director Karen DeMarco, police chiefs from the Hunterdon County Association of Chiefs of Police, and 911 dispatchers from the Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety with information on drug safety within the home.

John Kuczynski, a Drug-Free Task Force Specialist with Prevention Resources, said that since the cancellation of April 25th Spring DEA Take Back Day due to the COVID-19 crisis, many people are confined to their homes. They can, however, still take precautions when separating prescription drugs, which pose a risk in households. Those ingesting prescription drugs not prescribed to them can suffer an adverse reaction, overdose, and the need for emergency medical attention that can burden families, first responders, and healthcare workers who are handling the COVID-19 response and other medical emergencies. Homeowners should identify and separate for disposal all expired medications and those no longer being used, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

In maintaining proper public social distancing, permanent Rx disposal boxes at local police departments may not be accessible under the current health crisis. People should avoid unnecessary risk of exposure to our law enforcement partners and first responders.

If you or your household is at risk and have an essential need to dispose of prescription drugs, the Hunterdon County Justice Center's Rx drop box remains accessible to the public during operating hours on Monday through Friday.

Prevention Resources and the Safe Communities Coalition are grateful for the continuing partnership with Hunterdon County's health, law, and public safety organizations to help launch the Safe at Home Challenge.

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For more information on Prevention Resource and the Safe Communities Coalition, go to:
<https://njprevent.com/about-us/> <https://safecoalition.org/>

We offer our gratitude to the following participants in the first Safe at Home video PSA:

Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety 911 Communications Dispatchers
Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office
Hunterdon County Association of Chiefs of Police
Hunterdon County Department of Health
Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office

This video was produced by John Kuczynski, Drug Free Task Force Specialist, Prevention Resources Inc. and edited by Amanda Kovacs, Prevention Resources, in partnership with the Safe Communities Coalition.

The entire production of this video was done by participants and staff maintaining social distancing and utilizing smartphones and the internet.

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-321-0010, going online at www.CrimeStoppersHunterdon.com or through the free "P3 Tips" smartphone app. All tips are anonymous and kept confidential.

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