

## **Safeguard My Meds Rx Abuse Campaign Press Release 2011**

[Adapt this announcement to your community and include any events you have planned.]

[Insert Mayor's office logo]

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MAYOR [NAME] LAUNCHES PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE SAFE STORAGE AND PROPER DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**

*Public Service Announcement to Air on Local Television and Cable Channels*

[City, state], [date] –Mayor [name] announced the launch of a public education campaign to encourage the safe storage and proper disposal of prescription medications. The campaign, which is part of a national awareness initiative called **Safeguard My Meds**, will involve a concerted effort by law enforcement officials, medical professionals and citizens of [town/city] to reduce the abuse of prescription medications. The Mayor's office is also launching a public service announcement to air over local television and cable channels in the metro area.

Citing recent research that showed that every day, more than 2,500 teenagers abuse prescription medication for the first time<sup>1</sup>, Mayor [name] called on the community to help raise awareness about this growing public health problem.

“Many young people mistakenly think that it is safer to misuse prescription medications than illegal street drugs,” said Mayor [name]. “There seems to be less social stigma attached to misusing medications so it seems more acceptable to teens. And parents often are unaware that young people are abusing medications. Even when they do know, they don't know how to talk to their children about the dangers.”

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 12 to 17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than they abuse ecstasy, crack/cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined. Prescription drug abuse by teens is exceeded only by marijuana use, and there are just as many new abusers (initiates) 12 and older of pain relievers as there are for marijuana.<sup>2</sup> The prescription drugs most commonly abused by teens are painkillers, prescribed to treat pain; depressants, such as sleeping pills or anti-anxiety drugs; and stimulants, mainly prescribed to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Sixty percent (60%) of teens who have abused prescription painkillers did so before age 15.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership for a Drug Free America/ ONDCP, “Teens and Prescription Drugs”, Feb., 2007

<sup>2</sup> National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy, Prescription for Danger, Jan. 2008

With the support of local healthcare professionals, businesses, and families, including **[names of campaign partners]**, Mayor **[name]** is encouraging people to take steps to safeguard medicines in the home and become better educated on problem of prescription drug abuse so that they can talk to their children and help them avoid the dangers.

“It is time for all of us to call attention to this problem and work together to curb the abuse of prescription medications,” said [campaign partner]. “The first place to begin is right at home. People can help keep medicines out of the wrong hands by monitoring the contents of their medicine cabinet. They should also encourage friends and relatives to safeguard medications in their homes and consult a pharmacist about how to properly dispose of medications that are no longer needed.”

In addition to warning the public about the dangers of abusing prescription medications, medical experts cautioned about the collateral damage that is caused by medication abuse.

“It is very important to remember that prescription medications have a legitimate medical purpose and can be very beneficial when used properly under the doctor’s supervision,” said [medical expert or local health official]. “The abuse of prescription medications often makes it difficult for people who need these medicines to get the treatment they deserve.”

**Safeguard My Meds** supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Community Pharmacists Association and pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma to reduce the abuse of prescription medications. Visit [www.safeguardmymeds.org](http://www.safeguardmymeds.org) for more information on the safe storage and disposal of prescription medications.

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