

Safeguard My Meds Rx Abuse Campaign Press Release 2011

[Adapt this announcement to your event, including the type of event, date, etc.]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **[Media Relations Person]**
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[Town/City]'S TOWN-HALL MEETING [OR OTHER EVENT] URGES [CITY]'S RESIDENTS TO RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS OF ABUSING PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

12 to 17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than they abuse ecstasy, crack/cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined.

[City, state], [date] – At a town-hall meeting today hosted by the city of **[town/city]**, Mayor **[name]** called for a concerted effort by law enforcement officials, medical professionals and citizens of **[town/city]** to reduce the illegal trafficking and abuse of prescription medications.

Citing recent research that showed that every day, more than 2,500 teenagers abuse prescription medication for the first time¹, 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.² 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 15.³

With the support of guests, local businesses, and families, including **[names of campaign partners]**, Mayor **[name]** encouraged people to take steps to safeguarding medicines in the home and become better educated on problem of prescription drug abuse so that they can talk

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

² National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007

³ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Prescription for Danger, Jan. 2008

to their children and help them avoid the dangers. The meeting included a panel discussion with local law enforcement and medical experts including **[name of local legislator/special guest or experts]**, who addressed the dangers of prescription drug abuse in the community and provided tips and resources on how people can help reduce the problem.

Town-hall meeting participants endorsed the mayor's effort to combat the illegal trafficking and abuse of prescription medications.

"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]. "The abuse of prescription medications often makes it difficult for people who need these medicines to get the treatment they deserve."

The Mayor's office is also launching a public service campaign to air over video stations in the metro area. The town hall meeting and the PSA campaign are part of a national awareness initiative called **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 for more information on the safe storage and disposal of prescription medications.

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