

Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

TOOLKIT





Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Tool Kit



Written and Developed
by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
and underwritten by an unrestricted educational grant
from The Purdue Pharma Fund.

Overview and Introduction

Prescription drug abuse is emerging as one of the most serious prevention issues in this country today. No longer just the “silent” misuse or abuse of medications by women, people with chronic pain, and the elderly, prescription drug abuse is fast becoming a trend among young people, cutting across economic and cultural boundaries, metropolitan and rural areas.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), reports that prescription drug abuse accounts for about a third of all drug abuse in the United States. Clearly, this is an issue we can no longer ignore.

According to the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse:

- ◆ In 1999, an estimated nine million people aged 12 and over (about 2 percent of the population) were using prescription drugs non-medically: including pain relievers (2.6 million), sedatives or tranquilizers (1.3 million), and stimulants (0.9 million).
- ◆ In 1999, 1.5 million persons used pain relievers non-medically for the first time – an alarming rise compared to the mid-1980’s when the figure was less than 400,000.
- ◆ 12- to 14-year-olds reported prescription medications as one of two primary drugs used.

Prescription drugs tend to be inexpensive and relatively accessible. Their abuse is arguably more dangerous than illicit drugs as their concentration is “pure and strong.” Disturbingly, survey data also show that abuse of prescription drugs prevails in all age groups:

- ◆ Persons aged 18 to 25 are more likely than persons in other age groups to begin abusing prescription drugs.
- ◆ Between the ages of 12 and 17, girls are more likely than boys to begin prescription drug abuse and are more likely to abuse stimulants and sedatives than other prescription drugs.
- ◆ Women using a sedative, anti-anxiety drug, or hypnotic are almost twice as likely as men to become addicted
- ◆ People aged over 65 represent about 13 percent of the US population, but consume one-third of all prescription drugs. These patients often suffer from multiple diseases for which they take multiple drugs and are therefore more vulnerable to unintentionally misusing and becoming habituated to prescription medications.

A recent national survey revealed that 46.6 percent of primary care physicians find it difficult to discuss prescription drug abuse with patients for whom they prescribe medications. Thus clearly action is needed on both sides of the prescribing desk.

What's Being Done About this Problem

Community coalitions—with their active networks joining health care practitioners, community health organizations, law enforcement personnel, pharmaceutical companies, school systems, and families—are ideally placed to assess and respond to the prescription drug abuse problem. In December 2000, CADCA created an opportunity for community leaders to talk about the problems associated with prescription drug abuse and how to address those challenges. Fifteen anti-drug coalition leaders from across the country were brought together for a three-hour focus group to:

1. Talk about prescription drug abuse in their communities; and
2. Identify messages, methods, and materials that better educate the public, education departments, health care providers, and other community-based organizations about the abuse of such drugs.

The next step was CADCA's *Prescription Drug Abuse Community Survey* conducted in October 2001 and publication of a technical assistance manual, *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention: Where Do We Go From Here?* (Number 38 in the CADCA *Strategizer* series). A section of CADCA's Web site was also set aside specifically to address the prescription drug abuse issue.

The *Community Survey* was conducted to assess local awareness of the prescription drug abuse issue, and to ascertain what progress coalitions are making in reducing and preventing abuse. Participants included 212 coalitions from 42 states. While 38 percent of coalitions rated prescription drug abuse as a "4" or "5" on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 rep-

resenting a “big issue,” most of the coalitions surveyed ranked it only as a “3.” This resulted despite a growing national awareness that prescription drug abuse is fast becoming a major problem. Fewer than 20 percent of the coalitions surveyed reported a prescription drug abuse initiative as part of their overall mission.

To improve awareness of this issue among coalitions, CADCA urges its members to visit its Web site (www.cadca.org) and to utilize *Strategizer 38*, which provides key information about prescription drug abuse, information on promising practices in the field, and additional resources for coalitions, including an idea sampler and reports from communities in action.

CADCA also urges its members to use this toolkit to increase awareness of the prescription drug abuse issue in their community as a step toward improving community readiness to address this serious issue.

The toolkit includes information on how to engage the community in this campaign and provides tools for raising community awareness such as press releases, PSA's, opinion-editorials, letters to the editor and sample talking points for presentations.



Campaign Overview

The two primary goals of CADCA's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention campaign are to:

- ◆ Increase public awareness of the hazards of prescription drug misuse, abuse, and addiction across the diverse populations it can affect, and
- ◆ Equip communities with strategies and techniques to deal with the prescription drug abuse problem.

CADCA will continue to lead the effort by providing information, assistance and recommending prevention strategies to the field. Central to this effort are the five “plan of action” guidelines that urge coalitions to:

- ◆ Conduct a proper needs and assets assessment with formal data gathering to pinpoint precisely what prescription drug abuse issues exist and which populations are involved;
- ◆ Develop awareness of what other organizations in the community are doing relative to prescription drug abuse and offer to collaborate with them;
- ◆ Educate the community about the dangers of prescription drug abuse and how it can occur;
- ◆ Maintain a directory of treatment facilities;
- ◆ Advocate proper enforcement of all relevant laws.



How to Determine if Your Community Has a Prescription Drug Abuse Problem

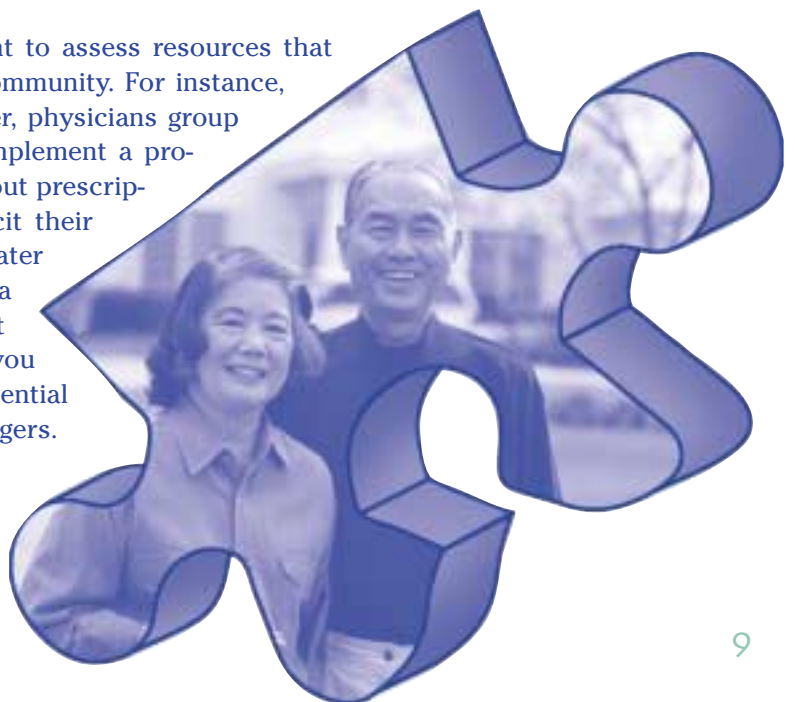
Most community coalitions are familiar with needs assessment as a tool to isolate specific substance abuse problems and identify risk factors. This is especially important with prescription drug abuse as this form of substance abuse can seem particularly “hidden” and take many different guises. Your prevention efforts can be successful only if you first identify exactly what form prescription drug abuse takes in your community and what populations are affected.

A needs assessment is basically the collection of data about a problem and the analysis of the data to determine what problems exist, how they might be addressed with science-based strategies, and how they should be prioritized.

There are two kinds of data that can be collected: archival and survey.

- Archival data is the simplest to gather and consists of the statistics and records that many agencies collect. All types of agencies keep records and collect data—school districts, police departments, hospitals, child abuse referral hotlines, etc. This data can be used to develop an overall picture of substance abuse within the coalition’s geographic area of interest.
- Survey data represents information gathered about the feelings, attitudes, and/or behaviors of individuals within specific populations. Collection of this data can yield valuable and detailed evidence about the substance use/abuse behavior, risks, and assets for groups of people. Surveys are more costly and more difficult to conduct than existing archival data but are almost always needed to develop a clear picture of the substance abuse problem.

Your coalition will also want to assess resources that may be available in your community. For instance, perhaps a health care center, physicians group or hospital has begun to implement a program to raise awareness about prescription drug abuse. If so, elicit their help and collaboration. Later you will see how the media can be an important resource to cultivate as you spread the word about potential prescription drug abuse dangers.



Finally, you need to assess community readiness to address prescription substance abuse issues. Community readiness is the extent to which a community is adequately prepared to implement a drug abuse prevention program. An effective prevention effort must have the support and commitment of key community stakeholders and the necessary implementation resources to achieve its aim.

Through extensive research on community development and substance abuse prevention efforts, Oetting and colleagues (Oetting et al. 1995) have identified nine stages of readiness through which communities develop; the higher the stage of development, the greater the degree of readiness.

Nearly 90 percent of the community coalitions who participated in CADCA's *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Community Survey* in October 2001 reported being only at Stage Three or less in terms of community readiness on this issue. Clearly there is much work to be done.

The first three stages of readiness according to the Oetting scale, and strategies coalitions might use to move beyond each stage, are:

Stage 1: Community Tolerance/No Knowledge

Community norms actively tolerate or encourage the behavior, although the behavior may be expected of one group and not another (e.g., by gender, race, social class, or age). The behavior, when occurring in the appropriate social context, is viewed as acceptable or as part of community norm. Those who do not engage in the behavior may be tolerated, but might be viewed as somewhat deviant.

Suggested Strategies:

- ◆ Conduct small-group and one-on-one discussions with community leaders to identify perceived benefits and how norms reinforce use.

- ◆ Conduct small-group and one-on-one discussions with community leaders on the health, psychological and social costs to change perceptions with those most likely to be part of the group that begins development of programs.

Stage 2: Denial

There is usually recognition that the behavior is or can be a problem. Community norms usually would not approve of the behavior, but there is little or no recognition that this might be a local problem. If there is some idea that it is a problem, there is a feeling that nothing needs to be done about this locally, or that nothing can be done about it.

Suggested Strategies:

- ◆ Initiate educational outreach programs to community leaders and community groups interested in sponsoring local programs focusing on the health, psychological and social costs.
- ◆ Make use of local incidents in one-on-one discussions and educational outreach programs that illustrate the harmful consequences.

Stage 3: Vague Awareness

There is a general belief that there is a local problem and that something ought to be done about it. Knowledge about local problems tends to be stereotypical and vague, or linked only to a specific incident or two. There is no immediate motivation to do anything. No identifiable leadership exists, or leadership lacks energy or motivation.

Suggested Strategies

- ◆ Initiate educational outreach programs on national and state prevalence rates of substance abuse and prevalence rates in communities with similar characteristics, including use of local incidents that illustrate harmful consequences.
- ◆ Develop a local media campaign that emphasize consequences.



NIDA's *Community Key Leader Survey* (available at www.secapt.org/science1crsurvey.html) is an excellent tool for assessing community readiness. It gauges key leaders' awareness of, concern about, and action currently underway to address substance abuse issues and can be used for assessing the local prescription drug abuse situation. CADCA's *Strategizer 36* (Coalition 102: Leadership—Sustaining the Momentum) and *Building Drug-Free Communities: A Planning Guide*, both available directly from CADCA's Web site.

Community readiness is often directly connected to political issues that surface in some areas. Communities that are home to a major pharmaceutical company might be a harder "sell" in terms of community awareness and acceptance of the problem. Often the medical community is reluctant to get involved in this problem or accept any responsibility for lax prescribing practices. Community members, especially the elderly, might be concerned that stricter enforcement of prescription laws will lead to difficulties in securing the drugs that they legitimately need. Coalitions need to make sure they address such broader concerns when developing/considering the issue of community readiness.

CADCA's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign

Community anti-drug coalitions are uniquely positioned to address this serious substance abuse issue. They have the mechanisms in place to work collaboratively with diverse groups throughout the community. They understand the issues of substance abuse and can access information on this new threat. Often they have important relationships with the media, as well as other community groups. They know the pulse of the community.

CADCA is launching a campaign to help community coalitions deal with this new problem. Cooperating in this effort is Purdue

Pharma, maker of the effective but highly controversial painkiller OxyContin, which recently launched a nationwide advertising campaign to promote its efforts to fight misuse of the prescription drug.

The purpose of this tool kit is to help prepare community coalitions to add prescription drug abuse prevention to their mission. Initially this is an education campaign. Members of the coalition and the community must be convinced that a problem exists, and that it is a serious problem, on an equal footing with other substance abuse issues.

What's the Message?

Similar to other successful prevention and deterrence initiatives, the approach must be based on facts, community and target audience buy-in, and the creation of effective materials and strategies.

The approach also must address the concerns of people who have a legitimate need for prescription medications and patients whose lives have been made more livable because of prescription drugs. Most people who are prescribed prescription drugs by a doctor do not abuse them. Effective pain control, in particular, is clearly a vital aspect of modern medical care that needs to be preserved and maintained not diminished.

Many individuals are simply not aware that any drug that a doctor gives them a prescription for can be dangerous if not taken as prescribed. In addition, a distinction needs to be drawn between physical dependence on a drug (built-up tolerance to the drug over an extended period of use – which may be inevitable) and addiction (compulsive drug seeking.) It is important to realize that physical dependence by no means automatically leads to addiction; while addiction is a disease that requires diagnosis and treatment.

Who Needs to be Involved?

Virtually everyone!

Prescription drug abuse is a particularly insidious problem about which many individuals and communities are in denial. Thus, it is vital to engage every sector of the community, including:

- Law enforcement officials

- Health care professionals (doctors, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, etc.)
- Schools
- Religious institutions and community service organizations
- All age groups: Teens and young adults, parents, older adults, women, athletes, etc.
- And, above all, the media.

Many CADCA members have witnessed firsthand the value of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign and have made it an integral part of their own coalition's efforts. As with that campaign, CADCA's prescription drug initiative will enlist the help of the media to spread awareness of the negative effects of prescription drug abuse. Coalitions will be urged to develop strategies to enhance resiliency. Many of the suggestions included in CADCA's "Community Action Kit" for the national media campaign are equally useful in this new initiative. Among those suggestions (along with some new ones):

Engage the Media:

- Request they do a news story highlighting the prescription drug abuse problem.
- Run a press release, op-ed or letter to the editor that you have authored.
- Request that a youth-oriented radio station support your local activities.
- Discourage irresponsible, inaccurate or incomplete media coverage of prescription drug abuse.

Engage the Medical Community:

- Encourage physicians to use "fraud-proof" prescription pads.
- Develop pharmacy alerts for posting throughout the community.
- Encourage the health care community to take a public stand on this issue.
- Be sure to include all sectors of the health care community in your coalition membership and planning.
- Build awareness within the medical community of "doctor shopping," the practice of misleading physicians to obtain multiple, improper prescriptions.

Engage Local Businesses:

- Request a business (large or small) display your materials in their break room.
- Offer to conduct parent trainings during the work day.
- Have local businesses distribute educational materials (available through ONDCP) to their employees geared to workers' kids.
- Help create and implement drug-free workplace programs and be sure to include a prescription drug abuse component.

- Invite a business to view CADCA's satellite broadcast about the prescription drug abuse issue.

Engage Educational Systems:

- Run a student-created PSA contest in a middle or high school.
- Suggest these PSAs be incorporated into the curriculum to generate classroom discussion.
- Request the PSAs be aired on school district cable systems or over the intercom.
- Encourage teachers to allow students to either mentor or tutor other students as part of their learning assignments.
- Support the development of a youth coalition at a middle school.
- Create a youth panel that helps to create and implement school policies on drug use.

Engage Concerned Citizens:

- Sponsor a prescription drug abuse prevention training for parents, grandparents and other caregivers, especially caregivers for the elderly.
- Distribute your materials to community athletic programs.
- Encourage adults to participate in community service programs with their kids.
- Insert a positive anti-drug message in a church bulletin, community news paper or college publication.
- Develop a web site for your coalition that links users to campaign web sites and provides simple parenting tips to help raise drug-free kids.
- Campaign for a centralized state database to monitor prescription fraud.
- Lobby for increased penalties for those who illegally divert and traffick in prescription drugs.

Engage Youth:

- Encourage youth participation in mentoring activities such as tutoring, coaching and babysitting.
- Organize youth planning for drug-free after-prom and graduation parties.
- Establish a youth speaker's bureau to address the issues relating to prescription drug abuse (peer pressure, media literacy, heredity, etc.)
- Increase opportunities for youth participation in after-school activities such as sports, clubs or part-time jobs.

Media Primer

Media Tools

Writing an Effective Press Release

It is critical to write a press release that looks professional and contains the information necessary for editors and producers to decide whether to run the release.

Format Suggestions

- **Identification** — Type the word "Contact" in the upper right corner of the first page of your release and add the contact person's name and telephone number.
- **Release Date** — Most releases should be "immediate." Only stipulate time when news obviously warrants holding until a certain hour.
- **Style** — Use wide margins and double-space text. Ensure both grammar and spelling are correct.

- **Headlines** — Skip two lines and insert your headline in boldfaced caps. Keep it concise and intriguing.
- **Body** — At the start of your lead paragraph put in caps the name of the city from which the news is originating. After the city's name, in parentheses add the date on which the release is being distributed.
- **Length** — Try to keep your press release to one page (if necessary, go to two pages). Edit your material thoroughly to ensure accuracy. If your release is more than one page, type "more" at the bottom of the first page. Type "###" after the final paragraph.

Writing an Effective Op-Ed

Op-eds, opinion/editorials, are articles that appear opposite the editorial page of local, state and national newspapers. They are an extremely powerful and cost-effective way to both educate a large number of people about substance abuse issues and influence policymakers.

Content and Style Suggestions

- **Be Timely** — Connect the op-ed to the release of a new survey, a recent article or an event in your community. Timing is the most important factor when submitting an op-ed.
- **Heed to Style** — Provide a title as well as the author's name and occupation. Make sure to mention the author's connection to your coalition. Double space the text and keep the article between 500-800 words. Localize the article with

statistics and stories that provoke discussion and provide practical solutions to the issue. Finally, end with an overview of your coalition's mission.

- **Find a Messenger** — Find the best author, or signer, of the op-ed. The author is critical in achieving the publication of the article and maximizing its impact. Ask a board member or a local politician to sign the op-ed.
- **Follow-up** — Call the paper 3-10 days after sending your op-ed and ask if it is being considered for publication. Think of your follow-up call as an opportunity to educate your contact about the issue of substance abuse — even if your op-ed is not published.

Letters to the editor are an easy way for you to voice your opinion to your policy makers and to educate people in your community about substance abuse issues. You can use these letters to correct facts in response to an inaccurate or biased news article, to explain the connection between a news item and your activities or to praise or criticize a recent article.

Content Suggestions

- **Know the Paper's Policy** — Find out the newspaper's policy for printing letters. Some have requirements for length.
- **Be Timely** — Capitalize on recent news, events, editorials or public awareness campaigns. Reference the name of the article and the date it was written in the beginning of your letter.

- **Keep it Simple** — Keep your points concise and try to keep your letters under three or four paragraphs in length. Ensure your first sentence is short, compelling and catchy. Don't be afraid to be direct, engaging and even controversial.
- **Get Personal** — Demonstrate local relevance with your letter. Use local statistics, personal stories and names to illustrate its significance to the reader.
- **Follow-up** — Don't be discouraged if your letter is not printed. Keep trying. You may want to submit a revised letter with a different angle on the issue at a later date.

Writing an Effective Radio Script

Radio scripts are normally 10, 20 or 30 seconds in length. The challenge in writing a radio PSA script is to effectively select your words so that they persuade the listener to take the desired action.

The first three seconds of the script are the most important — that is when you either capture the listener's attention or lose it. Below are several suggestions to help you clearly express your message in your radio script.

Format and Style Suggestions

- Use simple, declarative sentences.
- Round off numbers and statistics so that they are easily remembered.
- Try to avoid direct quotes. Paraphrase instead.
- Personalize whenever possible so that people can identify with the subject matter.
- Avoid extended descriptions about a particular individual or event. It will be too difficult to remember.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Insert date)

Contact: (insert spokesperson name)
Phone: (insert telephone number)

(YOUR GROUP) JOINS WITH
COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS OF AMERICA
TO STOP 'SILENT EPIDEMIC' OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

CITY, STATE (Date) — Prescription drug abuse has reached epidemic proportions in this country today. To help the many people from all walks of life affected by and at risk of this problem, (insert organization name) today announced that it is joining forces with the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) in launching a prevention effort specifically aimed at reducing prescription drug abuse in (insert community).

CADCA's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign was launched in [date]. It is a prevention initiative born out of rising national concern about the alarming trends in prescription drug abuse, coupled with consultation with member coalitions at a local level (via its *Prescription Drug Community Survey*, distributed in October 2001.) CADCA could clearly see the need for communities to mobilize resources and develop specific strategies to stem the tide of the rising epidemic. The two goals of the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign are: (1) to increase public awareness of the hazards of prescription misuse, abuse, and addiction and (2) to equip communities with strategies and techniques to combat the prescription drug problem.

“By joining CADCA's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign [or: “By engaging in a concerted prescription drug prevention campaign with the assistance and backing of CADCA”], we at (insert organization name) will increase awareness of the dangers of prescription drug misuse in (insert community), and by doing so reduce the grief and suffering, fatalities and addiction that can be the result of this abuse,” said (insert spokesperson name, title, organization). “For too long we have allowed the abuse of prescription drugs to continue unchecked and behind closed doors in (insert community). Now is the time to educate people right across the community spectrum, in all age groups and walks of life about the medications they're taking and encourage them to seek help if they need it, as well as to ensure increased enforcement of prescription fraud laws.”

(Insert three sentences describing your organization's current work on this issue, and any relevant plans for the future.)

“Much can be done to prevent and reduce the often devastating effects of prescription drug abuse,” says (insert name of CADCA spokesperson) “but without the involvement of committed groups at the local community level, a national campaign like this cannot be truly effective. When community organizations, such as (insert your organization), step up to the challenge and provide local leadership, change is accelerated and the whole community reaps the benefits.”

For more information visit CADCA's web site www.cadca.org. For more information on community efforts, and what you can do to help in (insert community), call (insert spokesperson, title, organization) at (insert phone number).

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Note: Press release should be double spaced and on your organization's letterhead

Prescription Drug Abuse: Against Doctor's Orders (insert author's name)

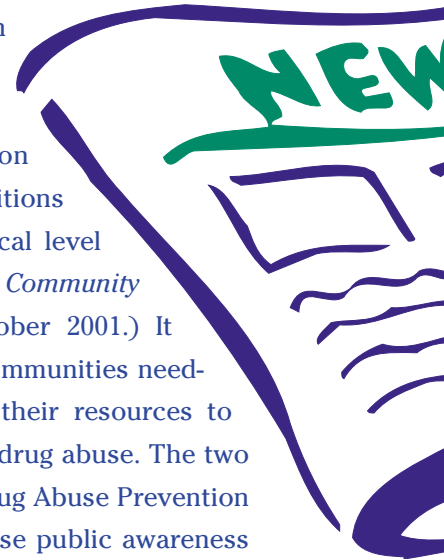
The non-medical use of prescription drugs is alarmingly on the increase in America today. The 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse recorded that in 1999 an estimated four million people aged 12 and over (about 2 percent of the population) were using prescription drugs non-medically—these included pain relievers (2.6 million), sedatives or tranquilizers (1.3 million), and stimulants (0.9 million). In 1999, the number of people who used pain relievers non-medically for the first time was 1.5 million—*three times* the number who did so in the mid-1980's. Teens aged 12-14 report that prescription drugs are one of two primary drugs used; women using a sedative, anti-anxiety drug, or hypnotic are almost twice as likely as men to become addicted; and elderly people, who making up about 13 percent of the population, account for one-third of prescription drugs prescribed each year, and are have a high risk of unintentionally misusing, or becoming habituated to, their medications.

Prescription drug abuse cuts right across all sectors of the community: from young teens to the elderly, from high school students and college students to health professionals like doctors, nurses and veterinarians. It can affect the unemployed in economically depressed regions, and the children of state Governors. (Insert a local story, example, or statistic) People do not realize that prescription medications are powerful drugs that, taken by people for whom they were not prescribed, in a manner that was not intended by the manufacturer, or in combination with certain other substances like alcohol, these drugs can be hazardous—impairing driving ability, causing health problems, and

in some cases leading to addiction. Prescription drug abuse and misuse has silently risen to become one of the most serious prevention issues in the country.

Recently, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) launched its Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign to meet the needs of communities across the country who are struggling with prescription drug abuse. The Campaign was born out of national concern about the alarming trends in prescription drug abuse, coupled with consultation with CADCA's member coalitions regarding the issue at a local level (via its *Prescription Drug Community Survey*, distributed in October 2001.) It was clear to CADCA that communities needed assistance to mobilize their resources to counter rising prescription drug abuse. The two goals of the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign are: (1) to increase public awareness of the hazards of prescription misuse, abuse, and addiction and (2) to equip communities with strategies and techniques to combat the prescription drug problem.

To be fully successful, CADCA's national Campaign needs the support and active involvement at the local community level. That is why (insert local organization name) has joined forces with CADCA to educate the general public, people at risk, health practitioners, legislators, law enforcement, educators, students, the elderly and those who care for them—in short, our community—about prescription drug mis-



SAMPLE RADIO PSA SCRIPT

use and abuse, and to find ways to combat this insidious problem which undermines community health. And we encourage you to join with us and do the same.

We must work together to develop and implement effective strategies to combat prescription drug abuse in (insert community.) As community leaders and parents, it is our responsibility to lobby legislators and raise funding and support—especially for prescription monitoring programs which are so desperately needed. Work must be done in

(insert community) to disseminate information about prescription drug abuse and develop comprehensive strategies to deal with it.

(Insert organization) is committed to (insert group's mission).The possibilities are endless for spreading the mes-

sages of the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Campaign. Encourage community organizations, your schools, workplaces and health caregivers to take action on this issue and take the time to get involved yourself: this is an issue that could easily affect any of us.

For information on how to get involved contact (insert organization) at (insert contact information) or visit CADCA's web site at www.cadca.org.

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Doctor, is there a problem?

Have you ever felt the need to cut down on your use of prescription drugs? Have you ever felt annoyed by remarks your friends or loved ones made about your use of prescription drugs? Have you ever used prescription drugs as a way to 'get going' or to 'calm down'? Prescription drug use can get out of control without you even realizing it. The first step is to recognize that you have a problem. The next step is to seek help. Just because your pills are prescribed by a doctor doesn't mean that it's safe to take as many as you want, when you want. And just because one makes you feel OK, doesn't mean that two will make you feel better. Prescription drugs are powerful drugs— after all, they improve quality of life of millions of Americans every day. But prescription drugs need to be treated with respect and taken as directed by your doctor. Addiction is a disease but there is help available. Contact (insert your organization name and contact information) or visit CADCA's website www.cadca.org for further information about how you can get help, or get help for someone you love.

The "silent epidemic"

You might think that mental confusion and falls are just a part of growing old—but are they? Elderly Americans use prescription drugs three times as much as other people—and frequently they've been prescribed pills for several different health problems. It's easy to take the wrong combination, or just plain take too many pills. When medication is prescribed after a traumatic event in an elderly person's life, such as the death of a spouse, sometimes they can be difficult to stop taking. Tranquilizers or sleeping pills—commonly prescribed for anxiety and

insomnia, and sometimes *overprescribed* by doctors for the elderly—can easily become an addiction. But you can do something. Encourage older adults to keep a prescription diary. Encourage older people to ask their doctor or pharmacist questions about their medications, and about possible interactions between medications. Caring for the elderly shouldn't be harder than it already is. For further information about what you can do contact (insert your organization name and contact information) or CADCA on [insert phone number]/visit CADCA's website www.cadca.org.

Where did all Johnny's pills go?

Wondering why your child's medication is finished already and why it's time for a new prescription so soon? Don't fool yourself: non-medical use of prescription drugs among America's youth is on the rise. And in schools around the country there is evidence of widespread theft, diversion, and abuse of prescription drugs. Children aged 12 to 14 reported in a recent national survey that prescription drugs were one of two primary drugs they used—non-medically. And *Time Magazine* reported last year on prescription painkillers as the latest drug trend, sweeping through the world of rap music, television, and even the sports world. But there are steps you can take. Make sure you keep *your* prescription drugs in a safe place; make

sure that students are not allowed to self-medicate at school, and that all prescription drugs are stored with the school nurse. Above all—get involved to help stop this disturbing drug abuse trend. Contact (insert your organization name and contact information) or visit CADCA's website at www.cadca.org for further information on prescription drug abuse prevention efforts in your community.

Prescription drug abuse IS drug abuse

She's buying drugs off the street and she's sleeping rough...Do you know how she got here? She started sneaking some of her mom's painkillers... While you might think that drugs that come with a doctor's prescription can't hurt you, quite the opposite can be true. Prescription drugs are concentrated—their active ingredients are pure and strong. Do you know how addiction to strong painkillers is treated? It's the same way that heroin addiction is treated. There is no easy way out of prescription drug addiction. Prescription drug abuse IS drug abuse and as

such it is always dangerous. Don't mess around with other people's medications. Remember that one person's prescription may be another's poison. Contact (insert your organization name and contact information) or visit CADCA's website at www.cadca.org for more information .



SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(Insert date here)

Dear Editor:

I read with great interest (insert author)'s (insert date) story entitled (insert relevant article title). While I agree with the piece's basic premise that (insert subject), I believe that this is not the full picture. There is an urgent need for sophisticated electronic—and preferably nationwide—prescription monitoring programs to stamp out the illegal diversion of prescription drugs on to our streets. We need better methods of catching those who engage in prescription fraud.

Prescription drug abuse is a serious problem in this country. Non-medical use of prescription drugs ranks second only to cocaine abuse in the United States ranks today. Clearly something must be done. We need adequate laws and we need adequate enforcement of those laws. Prescription monitoring programs (PMPs) are a proven way of reducing the illegal diversion of prescription drugs into the hands of—among others—our children. “Doctor shopping,” where individuals move around from one physician's office to another solely with the purpose of acquiring scripts for Rx drugs, is one practice that can be effectively stamped out by PMPs. They can also enable information about known suspects to be shared between pharmacists and law enforcement officials. We need these programs up and running in our state.

Recently Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) launched its Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign. This is a timely initiative born from national concern about the alarming trends in prescription drug abuse, and feedback from CADCA's member coalitions. The two goals of the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign are: (1) to increase public awareness of the hazards of prescription misuse, abuse, and addiction and (2) to equip communities with strategies and techniques to combat the prescription drug problem. PMPs are a crucial part of any strategy to combat prescription drug fraud and abuse.

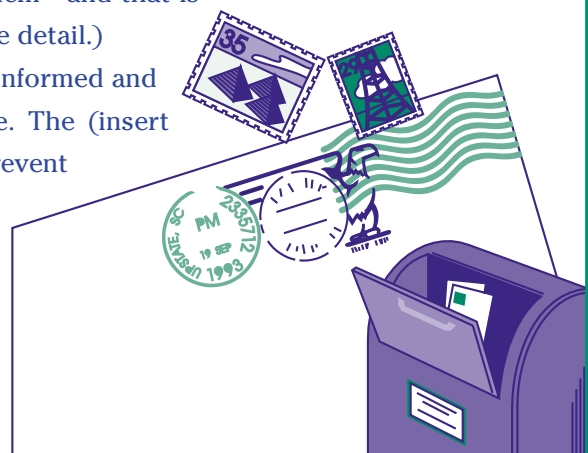
As community leaders and parents, it is our responsibility to lobby legislators and raise funding and support—especially for prescription monitoring programs which are so desperately needed. Work must be done in (insert community) to disseminate information about prescription drug abuse and develop comprehensive strategies to deal with it. At (insert your organization) we have already begun to raise awareness of the prescription drug abuse problem—and that is an important start. We are also (describe efforts in more detail.)

But we can't do it alone: we need the support of an informed and motivated community to beat prescription drug abuse. The (insert coalition name) is diligently working with CADCA to prevent Prescription Drug Abuse. Please join us in this important campaign.

(Insert name and title)

(Insert organization name)

(Insert address and telephone number)



Note: Letter to the editor should be double spaced and on your organization's letterhead.

TALKING POINTS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

This is a serious problem in all communities across the nation including ours

- In 1999, an estimated four million people aged 12 and over (about 2 percent of the population) were using prescription drugs non-medically: including pain relievers (2.6 million), sedatives or tranquilizers (1.3 million), and stimulants (0.9 million).
- Abusing prescription drugs is dangerous—perhaps even more so than illicit drugs—since their concentration is pure and strong, and they tend to be less expensive and more accessible than illicit drugs; in addition, the perception that taking prescription drugs that weren't prescribed for you is 'safe' is widespread.
- There is also a need to ensure that the needs and rights of those people in chronic pain or with a genuine need for these powerful drugs are preserved: it is misuse and abuse of prescription drugs—and in particular their fraudulent acquisition that is the target of this campaign—not the denial of life-improving drugs to ill people.

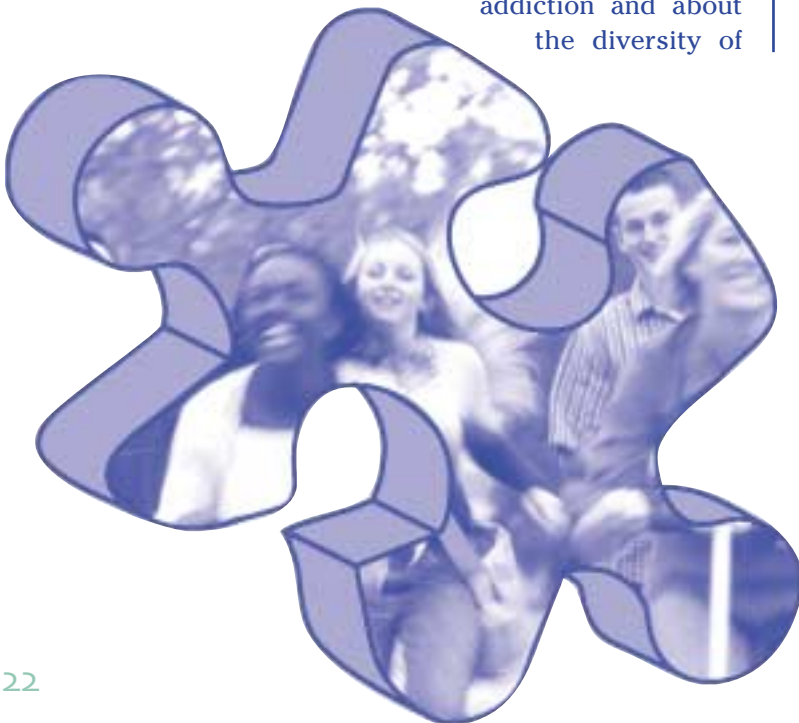
CADCA's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign

The goals of the Campaign are twofold:

- To educate people about the dangers of prescription drug misuse, abuse, and addiction and about the diversity of vulnerable groups within the community that it can affect; and
- To inform and arm communities with strategies and techniques—a 'plan of action'—to deal with the prescription drug abuse problem.

Other crucial steps in the direction of successful prescription drug abuse prevention include:

- A proper needs and assets assessment which will give an accurate picture of the problem at the local level;
- Finding and working with other organizations in the community engaged in combatting this issue;



- Working towards better enforcement of all relevant laws and increased penalties for prescription fraud; and
- Assisting healthcare professionals with identifying patients currently or likely to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

Campaign materials consist of the manual *Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention: Where Do We Go From Here?* from CADCA's *Strategizer* series, a satellite broadcast available for use at the community level, and this toolkit, as well as all the information and resources available at CADCA's website www.cadca.org.

Community involvement is essential to the Campaign's success

- (Insert organization) is teaming up with CADCA to provide the community with the information it needs—effective prevention materials—plus effective prevention strategies.
- (Insert organization) is doing (insert description of actions, plans etc) to combat the problem.
- Information is the key – information needs to be readily available to all groups at risk in the community and the message needs to be heard by those defrauding the system to tell them that they can't get away with it any longer. The entire community needs to be involved in the solution.



Resources

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
Web site: <http://www.aarp.org>

Colorado Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force
Web site: www.corxtaskforce.org

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
Web site: www.cadca.org

Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) Report
Available at: www.samhsa.gov/oas/dawn.htm

Gerontological Society of America (GSA)
Web site: <http://www.geron.org>

Elderly Use and Abuse of Alcohol and Drugs
Web site: www.amhserver.fmhi.usf.edu/schonfeld/gshome.htm

Join Together Online
Web site: www.jointogether.org

National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI)
Web site: www.naddi.org

National Association of State Controlled Substances Authorities (NASCSA)
Web site: www.nascsa.org/about.htm

National Council on the Aging (NCOA)
Web site: www.ncoa.org

National Drug Strategy Network (NDSN)
Web site: www.ndsn.org

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
Web site: www.dea.gov

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Web site: www.fda.gov

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
Web site: www.health.org

NIDA's Prescription Drug Web site:
www.drugabuse.gov

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
Web site: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov
'Pulse Check: Trends in Drug Abuse'
Available at:
www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/index.html

Prescription Abuse Web site
www.prescriptionabuse.org

Purdue Pharma LP
Web site: www.painfullyobvious.com
Web site: www.purduepharma.com

Southwest Ohio Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Web sites:
www.drugfreecincinnati.org
www.chmcc.org

University of Wisconsin Pain & Policy Studies Group
Web site: www.medsch.wisc.edu/painpolicy/



