

A Dose Of Prevention To Safeguard Our Kids

(NAPSA)—Recent studies point to a new substance abuse trend among teens: taking excessively high doses of over-the-counter cough medicines containing dextromethorphan to get high.

While cough medicine abuse is no secret to kids—in fact, a survey by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America found that one out of 10 teens, or 2.4 million kids, reported taking cough medicines to get high—parents are largely unaware of the problem. And of the dangers.

When used properly, cough medicines that contain dextromethorphan have a 50-year history of being safe and effective. But when taken at 25 to 50 times the recommended dose, dextromethorphan can produce a hallucinogenic effect, as well as heart problems, high blood pressure, loss of consciousness and seizures. The dangers multiply when abused with prescription drugs or alcohol.

“Parents need to be aware of this new trend in teenage drug abuse,” said Linda Suydam, President of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), which represents the makers of over-the-counter cough remedies. “We believe strongly in the power of education and are committed to raising awareness about medicine abuse and giving parents and other key influencers in teens’ lives the information they need to stop this preventable problem.”

To help educate parents and give them tools to help curb such cough medicine abuse, CHPA and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) created a toolkit for communities across the country. A Dose of Prevention is designed to empower parents and other adults by providing statistics, outreach materials and event-planning ideas to help them educate others in their communi-



ties about the problem. You can learn about the toolkit at www.DOSEofPREVENTION.org.

CHPA's Suydam offered the following tips to help parents combat teen cough medicine abuse:

1. Educate yourself about the problem and know the warning signs.
2. Talk to your teens about all types of drug abuse, including cough medicine abuse.
3. Safeguard your medicine cabinet; know what medicines you have and how many.
4. Monitor your teens' Internet use, as the Internet is a significant source of dangerous information that instructs kids how to abuse cough medicine to get high.
5. Seek professional help if you think your child has a substance abuse problem.

“Leading substance abuse experts tell us that teens who talk about drugs with their parents are half as likely to use drugs,” Suydam said. “This is a great incentive for parents to take an active role in talking with their teens about this problem.”

More information to prevent teen cough medicine abuse is available at www.DOSEofPREVENTION.org.