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# NEWS

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## **PARTNERSHIP FOR A DRUG-FREE AMERICA – ARIZONA AFFILIATE AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS TEAM UP TO PILOT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM**

The Arizona Affiliate of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America has been selected to pilot the national organization's Rx360 program. Rx360 is a research-based community education program developed by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America to raise awareness of the problem of prescription drug abuse by middle and high school-age children.

The Partnership will enlist the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Arizona Chapter and other health care professionals to conduct community presentations.

The presentations will:

1. Educate parents about the alarming rise of prescription drug abuse by teens
2. Encourage parents to communicate the risks of abusing these medications to their kids
3. Ask parents to take action by safeguarding their medicine cabinets.

“We are pleased to be partnering with the Arizona Affiliate for this important program” said Dr. Ronald Fischler, President, American Academy of Pediatrics, Arizona Chapter. “Teens take their lives into their own hands when they intentionally abuse prescription medications. Whether it's to get high or deal with stress, or if they mistakenly believe it will help them perform better in school or sports, teens don't realize that when used without a prescription, these medicines can be every bit as harmful as illegal street drugs. We have to educate our community on this issue.”

“Rx drug abuse is the most alarming trend right now with teens and this is a vital program for the Valley,” said Shelly Mowrey, director of programs and communications

for the Arizona Affiliate. “One out of four Arizona 12<sup>th</sup> graders has abused a prescription pain reliever, which is nearly double the national average. Fifty-one percent of teens say their parents have never discussed prescription drug abuse with them. This program will be a resource for parents to help them with that important conversation and to help save lives.”

The Rx360 program features a multimedia presentation delivered by healthcare and prevention professionals to parents and interested community groups. Community and faith-based organizations interested in scheduling a free presentation should contact the Partnership at (602) 400-5432 or by e-mail at [PartnerUp@PartnerUpAz.org](mailto:PartnerUp@PartnerUpAz.org).

**About The Partnership for a Drug-Free America**

*The Partnership for a Drug-Free America was formed in 1986 by the communications industry to educate children, parents and communities about the consequences of illicit drug use and the benefits of living drug-free. The Partnership is highly regarded for its proven effective media campaigns and public awareness programs. Independent studies from academia, business and science document the profound impact of The Partnership’s programs on attitudes and behavior.*

*The Arizona Affiliate was established in 2003 to carry out The Partnership’s mission to reduce illicit drug use in Arizona while meeting the unique needs of communities. Through its programs, the Arizona Affiliate inspires and empowers Arizonans to join in a united effort to prevent illicit drug use among teens through community-based education. The Partnership is a non profit 501-c-3 organization.*

*For more information, visit the Affiliate website at [www.PartnerUpAz.org](http://www.PartnerUpAz.org).*

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**Additional information:**

Intentional misuse of prescription medications is the biggest teen substance abuse challenge we face today. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs can be just as dangerous, addictive and even deadly as using ‘street’ drugs, and The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HSDUH), every day 2500 teens abuse a prescription drug for the first time. The trend is alarming:

- The number of new abusers of Rx drugs now greater than new users of marijuana (NSDUH, SAMSHA)
- Rx drugs are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12-13 year olds (NSDUH)
- Rx/OTC medications account for 7 of the 11 most frequently abused drugs (NIDA)

Medicine abuse has become “normalized” in teen culture:

- 1 in 3 teens report having a close friend who abuses Rx pain relievers to get high (PATS)

Aggravating the issue are weak perceptions of risk among both teens and their parents – both believe abusing medicine is NOT as dangerous as using “street” drugs – and ease of access to teens – medicines are readily available in their own or a friends medicine cabinet or from their own or a friend’s prescription.