



**DRUG-FREE ACTION  
ALLIANCE**

**For Immediate Release:**  
May 28, 2008

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### ***Abuse of Prescription Drugs is a Growing Problem***

(Columbus, Ohio) One of the growing substance abuse problems in the United States is the non-medical use of prescription drugs. Certainly many Americans benefit daily from the advancements in medicine. However, when particular prescriptions are misused or abused they can be as addictive and dangerous as illegal street drugs.

Teens are turning away from street drugs and using prescription drugs to get high. Individuals who abuse prescription drugs are prevalent in every demographic and cultural group throughout the United States. The latest studies indicate that in 2005, 2.1 million teens abused prescription drugs and that prescription drugs are the most commonly abused drug among 12-13 year-olds.<sup>1</sup> Teens perceive prescription drugs as “safe” because they require a doctor’s prescription to obtain. Nearly one in five teens report abusing prescription medications that were not prescribed to them.<sup>2</sup>

The unfortunate reality is that these drugs are available and accessible to teens. The availability of prescribed drugs like OxyContin, Vicodin and Percocet is increasing nationwide as more people seek prescription remedies for pain relief.<sup>3</sup> Nearly half of teens who use prescription drugs say that they get them free from a relative or friend.<sup>4</sup>

Drug-Free Action Alliance offers the following advice on handling prescription drugs. First, store prescription medications in a safe place where teens and their friends do not have access to them. Guard your prescriptions as if they were valuable – much like you would your bank account number. Next, it is important to regularly and safely dispose of unused prescription medicines that may be in your home. The federal government offers instructions on how to properly dispose of prescription drugs at: [http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper\\_disposal.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html). The Drug Enforcement Agency has a toll-free hotline (1-877-RxAbuse) to anonymously report the illegal sale and abuse of pharmaceutical drugs.

“By bringing attention to this growing problem, we are hopeful that everyone takes an inventory of their prescription medications and secures them,” said Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance. “If these drugs are outdated or no longer needed, they should be disposed of safely and properly so that they are not misused or abused.”

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization providing leadership to promote safe and drug-free communities throughout Ohio. To obtain more information, visit [www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org) or call Drug-Free Action Alliance at (614) 540-9985.

<sup>1</sup> Misuse of Prescription Drugs, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2006

<sup>2</sup> Partnership for a Drug Free America, Annual Tracking Study (PATS), 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network, June 2007, OSAM Networking Meeting.

<sup>4</sup> Misuse of Prescription Drugs, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2006

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Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce  
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network  
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention  
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:  
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for  
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy  
Council

[www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org](http://www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org)