



## White House Office of National Drug Control Policy National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign

### National Campaign To Prevent Prescription And Over-The Counter Drug Abuse By Teens

Today, John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, previewed television advertisements that are part of an unprecedented national public education initiative to alert parents and other adults about the dangers of teen prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drug abuse. While overall teen use of illegal drugs is showing remarkable decline, prescription drug abuse among America's youth remains alarmingly high. In response to this problem, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign in the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) will launch a new education initiative that includes the following elements:

1. **ONDCP will launch a national television, print, and online advertising campaign that will reach over 90 percent of parents more than a dozen times.** The Administration will leverage \$14 million to generate nearly \$30 million in advertising. This will include two television ads on 27 networks nationwide for two months, including a debut on Super Bowl XLII; print advertising running in 43 newspapers and 14 magazines across the country; and messages printed on prescription information sheets through 15,000 pharmacies nationwide, targeted towards adults purchasing commonly abused prescription drugs. The ads were developed in collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (The Partnership), with *pro bono* creative provided by Draftfcb New York.
2. **ONDCP will release a new Federal report to highlight the developing threat of youth prescription and OTC drug abuse.** This report is titled "*Prescription for Danger: A Report on Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse Among the Nation's Teens.*"
3. **The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is enlisting the support of community anti-drug coalitions with influential medical, health, prevention, and education groups to reach parents and other influential adults about teens and prescription drug abuse.**

**While we have achieved significant declines in drug use, teen abuse of prescription painkillers and OTC drugs remains alarmingly high.** Overall, youth prescription drug abuse is the second largest category of abuse, only behind marijuana.

- Each day, approximately 2,500 teens try abusing prescription painkillers to get high for the first time.
- In 2006, more than 2.1 million teens abused prescription drugs.
- Prescription drugs are the drug of choice among 12-13-year-olds.
- The majority of teens who abuse prescription drugs say they are easy to get from the home or from friends and relatives and for free.
- Forty percent of teens believe that prescription drugs are safer to abuse than "street drugs," and 27 percent of parents agree.
- While 70 percent of parents warn their children about the risks of marijuana, only 36 percent have similar conversations about prescription drug abuse.

**The new initiative will respond to this growing concern by enlisting the cooperation of parents and other adults in combating this danger to our Nation's teens. Parents are in a unique position to immediately reduce teen access to prescription drugs by cutting off the supply.** They should take the following steps:

- Safeguarding all drugs at home by monitoring quantities and controlling access;
- Setting clear rules for teens about all drug use, such as always following a medical provider's advice on dosage and not sharing medicine;
- Being a good role model;
- Properly concealing and disposing of old or unused medicine in the trash; and
- Asking friends and family to safeguard their prescription drugs as well.