



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

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ONDCP LAUNCHES FIRST MAJOR INITIATIVE TO COMBAT TEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE New Ad Campaign Debuts During Super Bowl

(Washington, D.C.) – The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is launching its first major Federal effort to educate parents about teen prescription drug abuse. This national public awareness campaign will begin with advertising during this year’s Super Bowl, and is ONDCP’s first paid TV advertising targeting parents in nearly two years. The effort includes broadcast, print, and online advertising, community outreach, and new print and online resources to help parents and communities combat the troubling trend of teen prescription drug abuse. The Administration will leverage \$14 million to generate nearly \$30 million in advertising. The ads were made in collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (The Partnership), with *pro bono* creative provided by Draftfcb New York.

Though overall teen drug use is down nationwide, more teens abuse prescription drugs than any other illicit drug, except marijuana; more than cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined. Every day, 2,500 kids age 12-17 abuse a prescription painkiller for the first time and more people are getting addicted to prescription drugs. Drug treatment admissions for prescription painkillers increased more than 300 percent from 1995 to 2005. Teens are abusing prescription drugs because many believe the myth that these drugs provide a “safe” high. Especially troubling is that the majority of teens who abuse prescription drugs say they are easy to get and are often free.

“When used as prescribed, prescription painkillers can be tremendously beneficial. But their abuse is becoming a serious public health and addiction problem. We may be unintentionally providing our teens a new way to get high,” said John P. Walters, Director, National Drug Control Policy. “Most teens who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from home, or from friends and relatives. We need parents to recognize that not all drug threats to their teens come from the street corner. Prescription drugs are in practically every home and parents can have an immediate impact on stopping teen prescription drug abuse.”

Research shows many parents are not aware of teen prescription drug abuse and are not discussing the dangers with their teens. Only a third of parents (36%) have discussed the risks of prescription drugs with their teen, even though research shows that parental disapproval is a powerful way to keep teens away from using drugs.

“The need has never been greater for parents to learn the facts about this dangerous behavior which has become entrenched among teens,” said Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership. “Partnership research indicates that both parents and teens have a perilous

misconception that abusing medicines is safer than using street drugs, and that is simply not true. Parents are the most important influence in helping teens make healthy choices, and talking about the dangers of intentional prescription and OTC drug abuse must be at the forefront of parent-teen conversations. We applaud ONDCP for their responsiveness to the data on this issue and for their action to alert more parents to the facts.”

The ad concepts underwent extensive focus group testing before production and were subjected to rigorous quantitative testing – involving parents and teens – before airing. The effort also includes the following advertising and non-advertising elements, which will unfold in the coming months and continue through May of this year, reaching over 90 percent of our target parent audience:

- Two television ads, the first of which launches during primetime Super Bowl viewing. Both ads will run on 27 networks nationwide for more than two months;
- An Open Letter to parents in 43 national and regional newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Los Angeles Times* endorsed by 11 leading health, medical, prevention, and educational organizations;
- Two Open Letter ads targeting health and school professionals in medical and educational publications running for 2 months;
- Two print ads targeting parents in 14 national magazines and running for 4 months;
- Online banner ads and search engine advertising for parents running for 4 months and driving to the Campaign’s Web site for parents www.TheAntiDrug.com;
- Targeted messages on prescription information sheets for commonly abused substances in 15,000 pharmacies nationwide during February and March.
- Featured content on ONDCP’s Web site for parents, www.TheAntiDrug.com, including a virtual house tour showing “danger zones” in the home, as well as tips on safeguarding and disposing of prescription and OTC drugs;
- A new, comprehensive brochure on teen prescription drug abuse for parents; and
- A tool kit to help community groups implement local prescription drug abuse prevention efforts.

When used correctly and under the care of a health provider, prescription drugs provide many benefits. But there are serious consequences to abusing prescription drugs or combining them with alcohol or other drugs, as many teens do. ONDCP has released a full report: “Prescription for Danger: A Report on Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse Among the Nation’s Teens.” To view the report, visit: http://theantidrug.com/pdfs/prescription_report.pdf and to view the ads visit www.TheAntiDrug.com.

Since its inception in 1998, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has been authorized by Congress to reduce and prevent teen drug use. For more information on the ONDCP National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com.