

## **Generation Rx: The Adolescent Pharming Phenomenon**

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast  
Thursday, April 3, 2008  
11:00 - 1:00 p.m. (Central Time)**

**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health  
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division**

## **Prescription Drugs & America's Youth Meet Generation Rx**

**April 3, 2008**



**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health  
Video Communications and Distant Learning Division**

### **Faculty**

**Vaughn Ownbey  
Southern Regional Director  
The Partnership for Drug-Free America  
Asheville, NC**

### **Objectives**

- **Discuss the prevalence of intentional prescription drug abuse in adolescents.**
- **List the reasons why this trend has become so prevalent.**
- **Understand the specific dangers related to “pharming” and how adults can help adolescents avoid this risky behavior.**

### **Founded 20 Years Ago**

#### **Goal**

- **Apply marketing and communications expertise to unsell drugs / reduce demand among teens**

### **Accomplishments**

- ***The New York Times* says:**

**“One of the most effective drug-education groups in the U.S.”**

- **Since mid-'80's**
  - **Drug use in America has declined > 32% 32**

### **Accomplishments**

- Today: 7.4 million fewer drug users
- Teens' overall substance abuse steadily declining
- Regular use of cocaine plummeted astonishing 72%

### **Research-Based**

- All work grounded in quantitative and qualitative data & learning
- Including Partnership Attitude Tracking Study
- Highly respected data source
- Now in 18<sup>th</sup> year

### **Allied With Corporations, Associations, Foundations, Government**

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals
- Consumer Specialty Products Association/Alliance for Consumer Education
- Met Life Foundation
- Consumer Healthcare Products Association

### **Allied With Corporations, Associations, Foundations, Government**

- White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
- National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information
- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

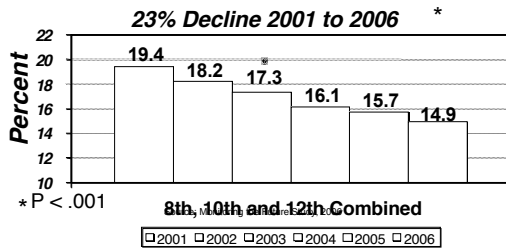
### **Allied With Corporations, Associations, Foundations, Government**

- Major League Baseball
- Purdue Pharma
- Endo Pharmaceuticals
- Yahoo!
- Google
- Comcast Cable
- Cardinal Health
- Procter & Gamble Fund

### **Allied With Corporations, Associations, Foundations, Government**

- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency
- U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- National Institute for Drug Abuse
- Treatment Research Institute

## Percent of Students Reporting Past Month Use of Any Illicit Drug Has Decreased



## An Immediate Need

- Parents with children at risk:
  - 33 million parents/caregivers with kids in grades 4-12 (ages 8-17)
  - 10,000 kids turn 13 every day
    - 13.4 is the average age of first drug use
- Parents with children who are experimenting
  - 12-15 million kids in grades 6-12 (ages 11-17) use alcohol and/or drugs each year

## An Immediate Need

- Parents with children who are in trouble
  - 1.4 million youths (ages 12-17) have been classified as needing treatment for illicit drug use
  - 7.4 million college students (ages 18-21), of which
    - 6.3 million have a lifetime use of alcohol/3.8 million illicit drugs
    - 6 million have used alcohol/2.7 illicit drugs over the past year
    - 5 million have used alcohol/1.5 million illicit drugs over the past month

## Medicine Abuse is Becoming “Normalized” in Teen Culture

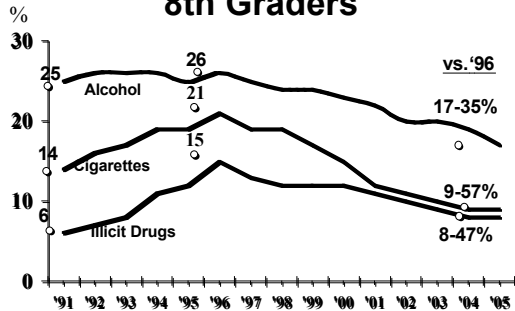
- 1 in 3* teens report having a close friend who abuses Rx pain relievers to get high
- 1 in 4* teens report having a close friend who abuses cough medicine to get high

## Piercing Parental Denial

- Dangerous convergence
- Vastly different drug scene
- What focus groups show

## Generation Rx: A Culture of Pharming Takes Root Among Teens

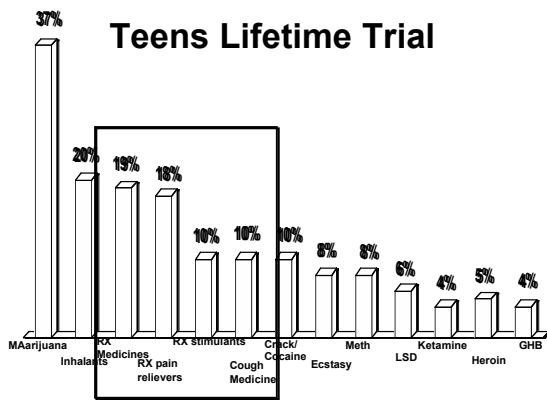
## Trends in Substance Abuse -- 8th Graders



## Recent Troubling Trends

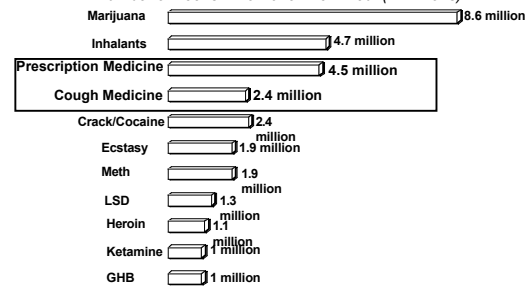
- Methamphetamine (regional)
- Inhalants (inhaled fumes)
- Prescription drugs (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives)
- Over The Counter drugs (antitussives, CNS stimulants, antihistamines)

## Teens Lifetime Trial



## New Landscape of Substance Abuse

Number of Teens Who Have Ever Tried: (in millions)



## “Pharming”



Kids abusing Rx or OTC medicines to get high, reduce stress and pressure, perform better

## Get or Swipe From Friends or Relatives for Free

Source of Rx pain relievers used nonmedically:

- 59.8% from friend or relative for free
- 16.8% from doctor
- 4.3% from drug dealer or stranger
- 0.8% bought on internet

## New Resources



In Person



Online

## Online Drug Abuse Encyclopedias

“One encyclopedia, Erowid, contains 20,000 documents that detail the practical aspects of drug use, including dosage, modes of administration, and intended effects. Its 250,000 daily page visits and 6 million annual unique visitors who seek information on >200 psychoactive substances attest to Erowid’s popularity and the perceived reliability of its information.”

Source: Pediatrics- Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics (February 2005)



## No Prescription Needed

- 9 of 10 internet sites that sell controlled Rx drugs do not require prescriptions
  - 185 websites in 2006, up from 157 in 2005
  - 60% offered “online consultations”

## Medicine Abuse Becoming “Normalized” in Teen Culture

- 1 in 3 teens report having a close friend who abuses Rx pain relievers to get high
- 1 in 4 teens report having a close friend who abuses cough medicine to get high

## Medicine Abuse Becoming “Normalized” in Teen Culture

Every day 2,300 teens try a prescription medicine to get high for the first time

## Parental Involvement Key to Drug Prevention

Kids who learn a lot about the risk of drugs from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use.

## **Need to Grow Parental Involvement**

Only 31% of teens  
“learn a lot about the risk of drugs”  
from their parents.

## **Parents Do NOT Understand Rx/OTC Medicine Abuse**

- Do not think their teen is vulnerable to Rx/OTC abuse
- Do not understand the behavior of intentionally abusing medicine to get high
- Think that if their teen did abuse medicines it would not be as dangerous as “street drugs”

## **Good Medicine Meets Bad Behavior**

## **Strategic Communications Campaign**

- Research tracking and evaluation
- National and local consumer public relations
- Multi-media national and local public service advertising
- Web-based parent resources + brochures (English & Spanish)
- Interactive teen web-site
- Outreach to physicians

## **Campaign Objective: Motivate and Equip Parents**

- Educate parents about medications kids are abusing
- Encourage communication with kids about risks
- Safeguard medications at home (and ask your friends to do the same)

## **Public Service Advertising Examples**

## Parents Web Content: drugfree.org

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Drug Descriptions & Effects  Search

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**Home** > [Resources](#) > Cough Medicine Abuse

### WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT COUGH MEDICINE ABUSE

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You already know about the dangers of illegal street drugs like marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamine. But did you know that some teens are abusing legal products like cough medicine, to get high?

**Q: What is cough medicine abuse?**  
 Cough medicine abuse is taking abnormally large doses of cough medicine to get high. The "high" is caused by taking a large amount of dextromethorphan, which is often abbreviated DXM, a common active ingredient found in many cough medications. This sort of abuse -- whether it's called cough medicine abuse, or dextromethorphan, or DXM abuse -- can be dangerous.

**Q: What is dextromethorphan?**  
 Dextromethorphan is a safe and effective active ingredient found in many nonprescription cough syrups, tablets, and gel capsules. When used according to medicine label directions, the ingredient dextromethorphan produces few side effects and has a long history of safety. When abused in large amounts, it can produce a "high" feeling as well as a number of dangerous side effects.

**Q: What are the effects of cough medicine abuse?**  
 The effects of the abuse of cough medicines containing dextromethorphan vary with the amount taken. Common effects include confusion, dizziness, double or slurred vision, slurred speech, loss of physical coordination, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, rapid heart beat,

**MULTIMEDIA**


**Shannon's Story**  
 Shannon, 14, experimented with cough medicine and it soon convinced her life. (5:53)


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## Parents Brochures (English & Spanish)



**Getting High on Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs is Dangerous**  
 Learn the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

**Preventing Teen Cough Medicine Abuse**  
 A Parent's Guide

**Medicinas con y sin receta: Las nuevas y peligrosas drogas de las fiestas**  
 Una guía para prevenir a su hijo de un uso indebido de drogas.

## Teens Web Content: dxmstories.com

MAKE UP *YOUR OWN MIND* ABOUT COUGH MEDICINE  
aka DXM, DXM, TRIPLE C, TUSSEN

So what's the big deal about DXM anyway?

**EXPERIENCES**

What's DXM (Dextromethorphan) and what does it do?

Confidential hotlines, Treatment centers, Answers

Draw your own conclusions about DXM. All information here comes directly from medical research, reliable news sources, and from people who have abused DXM.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America

## Concluding Points

**The scope of teen abuse of Rx and OTC medicines is large and evolving.**

**Unabated this abuse has far-reaching implications for health care and the costs to American society.**

**The disconnect between teens' and parents' attitudes and behavior is wide.**

**To reduce the scope and gap requires a long-term effort by many allies.**

**The Partnership for a Drug-Free America welcomes your interest and support.  
Thank you.**

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

### **Upcoming Programs**

**HIV/AIDS Update 2008  
May 7, 2008  
Wednesday, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Title X - Family Planning  
Topic to be Announced  
May 13, 2008  
Tuesday, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**