



MAJOR NEW INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TARGETING PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

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WASHINGTON, DC—January 25, 2008 Today, the Partnership joined with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to announce a major new initiative of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign—a national public awareness campaign alerting parents to the dangers of prescription drug abuse. New advertising for television will debut during this year's Super Bowl on February 3rd, marking the start of this first federally-funded effort to educate parents on the troubling trend of teens abusing prescription medication. In addition to two new television spots, the campaign includes print and online advertising and community outreach. *Pro bono* creative for the campaign was provided by Drafftcb New York.

While overall teen drug use is in steady decline nationwide, an alarmingly high number of teens are abusing medicines to get high. Recent studies by the Partnership, the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Study and others, indicate that more teens abuse prescription drugs than any other illicit drug, except marijuana—more than cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine combined. In the Partnership's annual tracking study, 1 in 5 teens reported abusing a prescription pain medication, and 1 in 10 report abuse of a prescription stimulant .

Teens cite a variety of reasons for misusing prescription drugs, far beyond "partying" or wanting to "get high." Teens are self-medicating to deal with problems like stress and depression, or to help them juggle schoolwork and other activities. Many mistakenly believe that Rx drugs are safer to use than street drugs, and report easy, free access to medications from their home medicine cabinet or from friends. Research shows parents are often not aware of the behavior or the dangers associated with misuse of Rx medications, and only one-third of parents have discussed these risks with their teen. The Partnership is urging parents, both through this new campaign and through our online resources and information to learn about this serious problem, share the information with their teens, and take action to prevent teens from accessing these medications at home.

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