

CCYSA ISSUE BRIEFING

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Prescription drug abuse causes more deaths than all illegal drugs **combined**

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS & 85225 YOUTH

The drug trends for 85225 continue to be alcohol, marijuana, synthetic drugs, and **prescription medication**.

Top 2 sources of prescription drugs for 85225 youth who abuse them:

- #1: friends
- #2: home

21% of 85225 youth consider **prescription drug abuse** to carry “*little or no risk*”

Prescription Drug Abuse

A National Epidemic Becomes a Local Problem

THE BASICS

- Prescription drug abuse is the nation's **fastest-growing drug problem** and has been classified as an epidemic by the Centers for Diseases Control
- Prescription drugs: #2 most-abused category of drugs (after marijuana)

Dealers and abusers typically get drugs by:

- Finding doctors willing to prescribe them (“*doctor shopping*”)
- Forging prescriptions
- Theft from pharmacies or individuals
- Buying from “*pill mills*”—clinics that sell massive quantities of pain meds with little or no examination of patients

3 commonly abused types of prescription meds: stimulants, depressants, and opioids

1. **Stimulants** (a.k.a. amphetamines)
 - E.g. Ritalin, Adderall
 - Prescribed for ADHD
 2. **Depressants**
 - E.g. Valium, Xanax
 - Prescribed for anxiety; sleep disorders
 3. **Opioids** (a.k.a. narcotics)
 - E.g. OxyContin (oxycodone), Vicodin
 - Prescribed for serious pain relief
- Opioids are the most commonly misused prescription drugs

THE RISKS

Deaths from opioid pain relievers exceed deaths from all illegal drugs combined

Opioid abuse is rising

- CDC: unintentional overdose deaths from opioid painkillers:
 - 1997: 3,000
 - 2008: **14,800**

Abuse of opioid meds (esp. OxyContin) gateway to heroin

Some who misuse prescription meds (especially teens) believe they are safer than illegal drugs because they are prescribed by a doctor and dispensed by a pharmacist. **THIS IS WRONG!**

- Meds that help people can actually hurt them when the instructions are not followed.

Dangers of prescription drug misuse include:

- Addiction
- Withdrawal
- Overdose
- Permanent organ damage
- Death

On average, it takes **less than 6 months to become addicted** to prescription medication.

- Depressants & opioids are **highly addictive**, with severe *withdrawal symptoms*
- Stimulants associated w/ hostility, paranoia & great risk for **cardiovascular failure and seizures**.

Prescription opioids largely responsible for **63% increase** in unintentional drug poisoning rates in U.S. from 1999 to 2004.

Drug-induced deaths are now **second only to motor vehicle crashes** as the leading cause of death from unintentional injury

- Vast majority of these drug deaths are linked in research to prescription opioids.

Cost of prescription opioid abuse in U.S. in 2001: **\$8.6 billion**

One-third of people aged 12+ who first tried drugs in 2009 began by using a prescription drug non-medically



PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE IN CHANDLER

Prescription abuse continues as drug trend for youth in 85225 zip code

Youth perception of risk in abusing prescription drugs:

- 56% said great risk
- **21% said little or no risk**

85225 parents believe it is worse for a parent to abuse prescription drugs than use alcohol, cigarettes, or marijuana.

2010 to 2011 increase in youth reports for possession of prescription drugs and heroin

- 2010: 0
- 2011: 6

Data suggests age of onset for prescription drug abuse is **13 yrs. old**

60% of Chandler parents involved in ICAN programs take a prescription med to manage pain, anxiety, or depression.

- Majority of these parents do not lock up or secure their meds and share them with neighbors

Youth who misused prescription drugs obtained them from:

1. **Friends** (62%)
2. **Home** (e.g. medicine cabinet) (28%)
3. **Family/relatives** (22%)
4. **Parties** (18%)
5. **Doctor/pharmacy** (10%)



ACTION TO REDUCE & PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Parents, law enforcement, the medical community, and government all have an important role to play

Education

- Educate parents, youth, & patients on dangers of misusing prescription drugs.
- Require prescribers to receive education on appropriate and safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription drugs

Monitoring

- Implement prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) in every state to reduce “doctor

shopping” and misuse of meds

- Ensure PDMPs allow for sharing data across states and are used by healthcare providers

Proper Medication Disposal

- Develop convenient and environmentally responsible prescription drug disposal programs to decrease the supply of unused meds in the home and protect the environment from contamination

Enforcement

- Provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to eliminate improper prescribing practices and stop pill mills

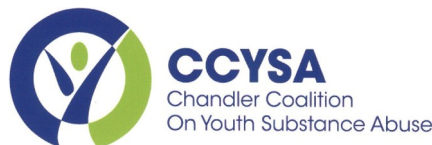
BE THE CHANGE

Things Anyone Can Do

- Use prescription drugs **only as directed** and never share them
- Follow disposal guidelines, and take advantage of community drug take-back programs
- Talk to youth about the use and abuse of prescription drugs
- If you or a loved one needs help with substance abuse, seek treatment and support individuals in recovery

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on prescription drug abuse in Chandler, please connect with the following resources:



Chandler Coalition on Youth Substance Abuse (CCYSA)

facebook.com/CCYSACHandler
ccysachandler.org

Ted Huntington

ICAN / CCYSA

Community Programs Coordinator

ted@icanaz.org

480-821-4207 Ext. 414