

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: MICHELE BURNSIDE 304.552.7982



Take Care WV Campaign Launched to Address RX Abuse in WV

Everyone knows drugs are dangerous. But did you know that sharing prescription drugs can be just as dangerous and deadly too? Sharing prescription drugs is also illegal.

Data indicate social access (sharing) is a major contributor to the misuse of prescription drugs. According to the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, **most prescription drug abusers obtain their drugs from family and friends**. In WV, 64% of nonmedical users of pain relievers reported getting the most recently used drug from a friend or relative for free, and another 7.6% reported buying them from a friend or relative.

“This issue demands an approach aimed at changing cultural/social norms about RX drugs,” said Dave Potters, Executive Director of the WV Board of Pharmacy. “In response, the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well-Being and WV Prevention Resource Center have launched a social marketing/media campaign that focuses on the message ‘Please don’t share prescription drugs.’”

The Take Care West Virginia: RX Drug Abuse Prevention Campaign includes:

- **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs):** *Television, radio, and print ads have been developed and are available to download online. During a five-week paid media placement beginning this month, the television PSAs will air more than 3,000 times on cable and broadcast stations across WV. The PSAs are also being distributed by local prevention partners.*
- **A WEBSITE (www.takecarewv.org):** *The campaign website features links to all PSAs, RX drug facts/statistics, information about proper RX storage and disposal, and a link to the WV Prescription Drug Abuse Quitline.*
- **COMMUNITY FORUMS:** *The WV Prevention Resource Center, WV Center for Civic Life and County Prevention Partnerships throughout West Virginia are joining with other local groups to sponsor community forums about prescription drug abuse and what we can do about it.*
- **RX BAGS FOR PHARMACIES:** *Counties that wish to participate will receive large quantities of RX bags (the white paper ones you get your prescriptions in) that include the campaign logo/message/website. County partners will distribute these to their local pharmacies to use this September.*

Take Care WV is supported with funding from a 2009 Drug Free WV Grant, WV’s federal Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (both grants administered by the WV Div. of Criminal Justice Services), and WV’s federal Projects of National and Regional Significance Grant. WV’s SPF SIG and PRNS grants are federal grants from the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

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How can YOU prevent RX abuse?

- (1) Please don't share prescription drugs. Only take RX medication as advised by your doctor.
- (2) Learn more and view/listen to/download the PSAs by visiting www.takecarewv.org. Share links to the website via email and social networking sites.
- (3) Participate in your county's forum/discussions about RX abuse. County prevention contacts are available at www.PrevNET.org.
- (4) Encourage your local media/businesses/schools/civic groups to run the PSAs as much as possible on their stations/websites, in their publications/newsletters, etc.

RX Drug Abuse Facts

- Prescription drug abuse is taking a prescription medication that is not prescribed for you or taking it for reasons or in dosages other than as prescribed.
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse (<http://www.drugabuse.gov>)
- West Virginians fill an average of 18.7 prescriptions per person annually compared to the U.S. rate of 12.
Source: State Health Facts.org (<http://www.statehealthfacts.org>)
- Prescription drugs are the second most commonly abused category of drugs, behind marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and other drugs.
Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy (<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>)
- More than 50 million Americans ages 12 or older report non-medical use of a psychotherapeutic (such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives) at some point in their lifetimes.
 - In 2005-2006, **WV exceeded the national rate** on self-reported "Nonmedical Use of Pain Relievers in the Past Year" in all age groups, especially 18 to 25 year olds.
 - Generally in 2002-2004, the highest rates of self-reported "Nonmedical Use of Pain Relievers in Past Year" occurred in southern counties.*Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm>)*
- **Prescription drug misuse/abuse is dangerous.** Risks include addiction, allergic reactions, drug interactions, overdose, respiratory distress, cardiovascular complications, seizures and death. *Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse (<http://www.drugabuse.gov>)*
 - Between 1999 and 2004, unintentional poisoning deaths in WV increased 550% - more than double that of any other state.
Source: Center for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2007
 - By 2004, nearly 95% of unintentional poisoning deaths nationally involved drug poisoning. The greatest increases involved "other and unspecified" drugs, psychotherapeutic drugs, and narcotic and hallucinogenic drugs.
Source: Center for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2007
 - From 2001-2006, approximately 97% of unintentional poisoning deaths in WV involved drugs or alcohol rather than other noxious substances.
Source: Aron J. Hall, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008
 - In 2006, 93.2% of the WV's 295 fatal overdoses involved prescription pain medication. *Source: Hall et al. Journal of the American Medical Association, 2008*

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RX Drug Abuse Facts Continued

- **Most prescription drug abusers obtain their drugs from family and friends.**
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Source: Special Tabulations from 2005-2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health
(<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda.htm>)
- **Sharing prescription drugs is illegal.**
Prescription drugs are controlled substances and may NOT be dispensed without a written prescription from a practitioner. *Source: Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.)*

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