# ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG PREVENTION CONNECTION

**County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team - ADEPT** 

### Volume 6 2010

#### IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1

Good Medicine~Bad Behavior

Page 3

Town Hall Meetings Increase Awareness

Page 5

Drug Diversion Prevention Network

Page 7

Parent Power

Page 8

Drug Abuse Training For Firefighters

### GOOD MEDICINE ~ BAD BEHAVIOR

Prescription and over-the-counter medications are quickly becoming the new party drugs for many teens nationwide. The 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), conducted annually by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), found a 12% increase among young adults abusing prescription pain medication. Data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) 2007 Monitoring the Future survey indicates 4% of 8th grade students, 5% of 10th grade students and 7% of 12th grade students have abused over-the-counter cough medicine to get high.

Parents may be aware of their children's familiarity with illegal street drugs, alcohol and tobacco, but may not be aware of the recreational use and abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Most parents do not realize that their home medicine cabinet and home computers are primary sources of these drugs for teens.

\_ \_

#### AN EMERGING TREND

In 2006, national focus on the emerging issue of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse among young people caught the attention of Marianne Cadiz, Health Educator, Community Service Programs, Inc. Project Positive Action Toward Health (CSP Project PATH). With funding from the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education & Prevention Team (ADEPT), Cadiz initiated a comprehensive over-the-counter drug assessment to identify the scope of the problem in Orange County. She conducted a literature search to identify past media coverage of over-the-



counter drug overdoses and abuse incidents and reviewed available prevention educational material. Cadiz visited retail establishments where over-the-counter drugs are sold in Santa Ana, Garden Grove and Huntington Beach, and interviewed store management to determine what control policies were in place for the display and sale of cold and cough medications.

"I was particularly interested in learning if there were any controls on over-the-counter medications that contained dextromethorphan

Continued on Page 2

(DXM)," said Cadiz. "It is the active ingredient found in many nonprescription cough syrups, tablets and gel caps. Over-the-counter medications containing DXM are popular with teens."

"The assessment highlighted the number and diversity of retail establishments where over-thecounter drugs can be purchased. Cough and cold medicine is relatively inexpensive and can be purchased at discount stores, in grocery stores, convenience stores and pharmacies," said Joyce Gore, Supervisor, CSP Project PATH. "In prevention we think in terms of the availability and accessibility of drugs. Over-the-counter drugs are easily accessible and relatively inexpensive. Our recommendation, based on the assessment findings, was to educate the community about the dangers of abusing over-thecounter drugs."

Cadiz developed educational materials and presentations for parents and youth addressing the risks and consequences of overthe-counter drug abuse, which she presented in school settings, at after school programs, and to parent and family groups. "The feedback we received from participants validated our assessment and the need for increased public awareness of the problem," Cadiz said.

#### **BIG PROBLEM** ~ **BIG INITIATIVE**

ADEPT recognized the need for a countywide collaborative to effectively address the growing number of Orange County youth abusing prescription and overthe-counter drugs. In November 2008, Stacey Zapanta, ADEPT Health Educator, convened a multidisciplinary work group of county-funded prevention providers, community stakeholders, law enforcement and drug diversion agencies to research and address the problem. The work group was charged with publishing a comprehensive countywide report that includes the scope of the prescription and over-thecounter drug abuse problem in Orange County among vouth ages 12-25 and recommendations for future

The work group met monthly to discuss research findings, plan and execute town hall meetings throughout the

prevention strategies.

county, identify long-term prevention strategies and next steps, and to design and develop components of the comprehensive report. School district, county, state and national prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse data were collected, analyzed and shared among work group participants to formulate and prioritize future prevention efforts.

#### THE DATA

The primary source of behavioral data used by the work group and included in the countywide comprehensive report to assess prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse among Orange County youth is the biennial annual California Healthy Kids Survey

(CHKS). This comprehensive data collection system enables schools and communities to collect and analyze data regarding local youth health behaviors. In the 2007-2008 survey, CHKS incorporated questions addressing prescription and over-the-counter drug use among 7th-12th grade students.

#### WORK GROUP AGENCIES AND PREVENTION PROVIDERS

- · Abbott Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
- Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement/Professional Diversion Investigators Network
- California National Guard-Drug Demand Reduction
- · Community Alliances for Drug Free Youth
- Community Service Programs, Inc.-Project Positive Action Towards Health
- County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, Prevention Team
- County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team
- Fourth District Parent-Teacher-Association
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-Orange County-Community Alliance Network

Orange County 2007-2008 CHKS data indicate that 10% of 9th grade students and 17% of 11th grade students have used prescription pain medication to get high, while 17% of 9th grade students and 19% of 11th grade students reported using cough or cold medicine to get high in their lifetime. With the exception of barbiturates, lifetime use of each of these drugs increased between 9th and 11th grade.

Data from the Orange County Coroner's Office for the period 2005-2007 indicated 42 accidental overdose-related deaths of persons ages 12-25 attributable to prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Over the same period, four fewer deaths (38) were attributed to

accidental overdose of illicit (street) drugs for the same age group.

#### THE REPORT

"The early work done by CSP

Project PATH and ADEPT on this issue demonstrated there was a need for education on the harmful effects of prescription and overthe-counter drug abuse," said Dan Gleason, Director, CSP Project PATH. "Then, two years later when we looked at this comprehensive countywide data, the findings were confirmed.

Although the Orange County data may parallel state and

national data, in Orange County, prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse is a problem."

"Through data analysis, town hall

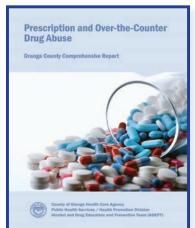
meetings and work group discussions we have identified the scope of the problem in Orange County. We recognize there is a crucial need for educational outreach to address the myths and

misperceptions among adults and youth regarding the misuse

and availability of these drugs," said Zapanta. "Now that the report is finalized, our next step is to reconvene the work group to review the strategies and recommendations and then to develop countywide prevention action steps, an implementation timeline and measurement criteria."

The Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse, Orange County Comprehensive Report is available on the ADEPT website at ochealthinfo.com/adept/publications.

For more information, please contact Stacey Zapanta, 714/834-4369, email: szapanta@ochca.com.



### **TOWN HALL MEETINGS INCREASE AWARENESS**

The increased use of prescription and over-thecounter drugs for legitimate medical reasons has resulted in an increased use for these drugs for recreational purposes among youth. Youth are able to acquire prescription and over-the-counter drugs easily and perceive them to be less harmful, with fewer side effects, than illicit drugs. As part of a countywide prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse initiative, government agencies, community-based organizations and community stakeholders collaborated to raise awareness of the problem among parents and students through town hall meetings.

In 2009, Community Service Programs, Inc. Project Positive Action Toward Health (CSP Project PATH) coordinated a town hall meeting in Anaheim and Huntington Beach, at Canyon High School and Huntington Beach High School respectively. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-Orange County Community Alliance Network (NCADD-OC/CAN) also coordinated a town hall meeting at Tesoro High School in Rancho Santa Margarita.

The program at each town hall meeting differed slightly; however, the overarching messages

reinforced through expert speakers, testimonials and resource materials were the same:

- Prescription and over-thecounter drugs are just as harmful and addictive as illicit (street) drugs
- Prescription medications, although prescribed by a healthcare provider, and overthe- counter medications are not safer than illicit drugs
- Nearly 1-in-4 Orange County youth ages 12-17 have used over-the-counter medicines to get high
- Prescription and over-thecounter drugs are relatively inexpensive and easily accessible

• Youth access prescription medications primarily through family, friends and the internet

The program at each town hall meeting featured a panel of speakers from the medical community, law enforcement and school administration who shared their experiences and observations about the harmful effects of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse among youth. Each program featured a testimonial from a youth

in recovery or a parent who had lost a child due to an accidental overdose of prescription or overthe-counter drugs.

The town hall program at Tesoro and Canyon high schools concluded with youth

and adult breakout sessions. The adult education continued with presentations from law enforcement and healthcare professionals on slang terms used by teens, signs and symptoms of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse, and the types of drugs most often abused by youth. Law enforcement officials discussed the availability of over-the-counter drugs and internet access to prescription drugs.

"The Tesoro High School town hall youth breakout sessions featured a presentation by an emergency room physician followed by a question-and-answer period," said Terah Glass, Health Educator, NCADD-OC/CAN. "Then youth were asked

what words or messages would be effective to increase awareness in a prevention campaign. Specifically, we wanted them to address the dangers of using over-the-counter and prescription drugs for non-medical use, and that these drugs are not safer than street or illicit drugs. We also asked how to effectively communicate the prevention messages to their peers via such sources as email, social networking web sites (i.e. Facebook, MySpace), text messages, and posters."



"At the Canyon High School town hall youth breakout session we also focused on the words and slogans to address prevention with their peers," said Celeste Bentley, CSP Project PATH. "It was interesting because we talked to them about prevention of a behavior they had little knowledge of until earlier in the evening; however, they understood the seriousness of the issue and became immediately engaged in developing prevention messages."

At Huntington Beach High School, CSP Project PATH collaborated with the Friday Night Live (FNL) chapter. The FNL program, administered countywide by the Orange County Department of Education, fosters healthy youth development by engaging young people as active leaders and resources in their communities. "FNL chapter members planned the entire town hall event and presented a pertinent and informative program," said Joyce Gore, Supervisor, CSP Project PATH. "The speakers' panel included a FNL club member in recovery. Her testimonial was poignant and provided the opportunity for adults and youth to ask questions about her

experience."

A total of 355 adults and youth attended the three prescription and overthe-counter drug abuse

prevention town hall meetings. Results from the meeting evaluations indicated that 77% strongly agree that prescription and over-the-counter drugs are as dangerous as street drugs, 59% strongly agree that it is easy for youth to get these drugs, and 66% strongly agree that the town hall meeting was very educational.

For the next several years, CSP Project PATH is working on a countywide prescription and overthe-counter drug abuse initiative with funding from ADEPT. For more information, please contact Celeste Bentley, Supervisor, CSP Project PATH, 714/441-0807, email: cbentley@cspinc.org.

### **DRUG DIVERSION PREVENTION NETWORK**

The continuing development and increased availability of prescription drugs has significantly improved treatment of pain, mental disorders, anxiety and other medical conditions. Prescription drugs improve quality of life for millions of people every day. However, the misuse or diversion of prescription drugs can be tragic, as observed in recent high-profile celebrity deaths attributable to prescription drug abuse.

In California, the 2006 annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, indicates approximately 214,000 youth ages 12-17, 456,000 young adults ages 18-25, and 812,000 adults age 26 and older, totaling nearly 1.5 million Californians misused prescription drugs during the 12 months represented in the survey. The characteristics of prescription drugs make this form of substance abuse of particular concern as the concentration is pure and strong; they are relatively inexpensive and accessible. Misuse or abuse of prescription drugs can result in a variety of adverse health consequences from dependence and addiction, to accidental overdose, toxic reactions, serious drug interactions, or death.

For nearly 10 years, the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE) has maintained a prescription drug monitoring system, the Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES), which tracks prescriptions written for controlled substances such as anti-anxiety medications, painkillers and sedatives. Each database record contains the date the prescription was filled; drug dispensed; quantity and strength; patient name and address; prescriber name and authorization number; and the prescription number.



During the summer of 2008, the BNE was involved in a variety of high profile drug diversion case investigations. These investigations came to the attention of the Attorney General's office, raising questions regarding the apparent ease of access and availability of prescription drugs. "We wanted to identify the most prevalent sources of prescription drug diversion in the state," said Sara Marie Simpson, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE), Orange County Regional Office. "We decided to look in the California CURES database at the top 50 doctor shoppers, which represents

adult patients who visit several medical service providers (doctors, dentists, clinics, emergency rooms) to obtain multiple prescriptions using the same medical condition. What we found regarding stimulants and pain medications was remarkable."

"We looked at the statewide CURES information and found persons who were seeing more

than 100 different doctors and/or going to more than 100 different pharmacies in one calendar year to obtain the same prescription drug. Some individuals had received thousands of dosage units over that period of time," said Simpson. "As a result of our research, we put together a statewide team to conduct investigations on the top 50 doctor

shoppers; we made arrests in some cases and filed cases with district attorney's offices."

"The problem is very complex and there appeared to be a lack of knowledge and awareness in Orange County, and throughout the state, about prescription drug crimes," said Simpson. "The diversity of prescription drug misuse, limited awareness among law enforcement and healthcare providers, the disparate access patterns for drug diversion identified through our analysis of the CURES databases requires awareness strategies be designed to address these diverse population

segments and professional groups."

"I worked in San Diego prior to coming to Orange County. The BNE, San Diego Regional Office participates in a Professional Diversion Investigators Network (PDIN), initially fostered by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). We worked closely with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, the state medical board, other public agencies and private businesses to investigate drug diversion cases more efficiently," said Simpson.

"In Orange County, local law enforcement and my office continually receive cases referred from CURES to investigate, either because they are high profile or there is a high risk component. To investigate these cases effectively, we needed to increase law enforcement's awareness and knowledge of the multiple components and complexities of drug diversion cases, and develop an efficient communication network for the investigative agencies involved," Simpson said.

To address the need for cross-agency communication, Simpson initiated the Orange County PDIN in January 2009, bringing together all elements of a case to network and effectively conduct investigations. The Orange County PDIN was established with a core group of essential agency representatives: DEA, Medical Board of California, Department of Insurance and the pharmaceutical industry to address

the various components of these complex investigations.

The primary objective of Orange County PDIN is to facilitate a cooperative effort across public and private agencies in the pursuit of targeting and minimizing prescription drug crimes, and to educate these agencies on the policies and procedures of the local and state judicial and regulatory agencies.

In September 2009 California Attorney General, Edmund G. Brown Jr., announced a new internet-based CURES database system that allows healthcare and law enforcement professionals instant access to a patient's controlled-substance prescription drug history. With CURES instant online access, healthcare professionals can identify potential doctor shoppers, prescription drug abuse or diversion before a new prescription is written.

"We are fortunate to have this PDIN in Orange County," said Stacey Zapanta, Health Educator, County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT). "The Network was developed primarily to assist law enforcement; however, Simpson has invited prevention providers to participate based on her assessment of the need for increased awareness among adults and youth countywide. She is experienced in working with Orange County coalitions and values the increased communication when

law enforcement, treatment and prevention providers work together to raise awareness on issues such as alcohol and drug abuse.."

The PDIN meetings provide a forum for law enforcement to discuss emerging trends, investigations, and identify cross-agency linkages. Information is shared regarding the implementation of community prevention strategies, comparative data on prescription drug abuse in Orange County, drug abuse prevention outreach activities and events.

"I didn't create PDIN, I just brought the concept to Orange County," said Simpson. "Prescription drug diversion is unique. In many cases, the persons abusing the drugs are contributing members of the community; they are healthcare, legal, law enforcement and medical professionals. They have a vested interest in getting well; they want help."

"To successfully address the problem, we need an integrated, comprehensive approach across all law enforcement agencies, health care professionals, pharmacies, treatment and prevention providers, private business and community leaders. PDIN is a model that brings all these disciplines together," said Simpson.

For more information on PDIN, please contact Sara Simpson at 714/558-6780, email: Sara. Simpson@doj.ca.gov.

### PARENT POWER

ore than a decade of research conducted by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), has consistently found that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs. Family Day - A Day to Eat Dinner with your Children<sup>TM</sup> is a national movement launched by CASA in 2001 to remind parents that frequent family dinners make a difference.

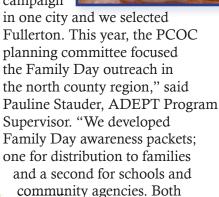
"When all is said and done, preventing teen substance abuse is a Mom-and-Pop operation. Parents cannot outsource their responsibility to law enforcement, public health agencies, or schools and colleges.

The fundamental obligation of those broader institutions is significant, but secondary," said Joseph A. Califano Jr., CASA chair and president, and author of the book High Society.

September 28, 2009, marked the second annual Family Day celebration in Orange County, sponsored by the Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) and the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT). President Obama issued a proclamation declaring the date National Family Day, reinforcing the importance of frequent family

dinners.

"Our goal last year was to introduce the Family Day campaign



awareness packets were available in English and Spanish."

The Family Day campaign incorporated multiple media and promotional elements. Comprehensive Family Day awareness packets were distributed to schools, libraries, faith-based organizations and prevention providers in the north region of the county. The packets included a history of Family Day, data on alcohol and drug use among youth in Orange County, healthy recipes, ideas for making family meals successful, resources, and family conversation starters. The International House of Pancakes (IHOP) restaurants displayed Family Day posters

and distributed brochures. PCOC planning committee members

made presentations to the chambers of commerce in the region, distributing brochures for the employees of member businesses. A Family Day announcement

was sent to parents using the school's phone alert system at two Anaheim schools, and a Family Day promotional announcement appeared on the outdoor electronic reader boards near the Civic Center in Santa Ana.

"To reach as many families as possible, we printed Family Day brochures in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese," said Stauder. "The objective of the campaign is simple: to remind parents of the importance of family dinners. Whether a family has dinner at home or in a restaurant, it is about spending meaningful time together."

For parents, hearing and seeing their children regularly enables them to spot subtle characteristics that may be signs of potential problems: stress, low self-esteem or persistent boredom. Time together over dinner, without television, phone calls or text messaging, provides an opportunity for parents to speak with and listen to their children. For more information about Family Day, contact Pauline Stauder, 714/834-4058, email: pstauder@ochca.com.



### **Drug Abuse Training For Firefighters**

The role of the firefighter/first responder grows each day as new threats to citizen safety are identified. As first responders, firefighters often have limited information prior to arriving at the scene of the emergency. Their ability to quickly assess the cause of the emergency requires extensive training and experience, and can prevent a situation from escalating. First response service can enhance emergency health care and bridge a critical time for victims awaiting the arrival of an ambulance.

The City of Fullerton Fire Department (FFD) requires annual drug abuse education training for all city first responders and firefighters. Captain Mike Boyd, FFD, is responsible for departmental trainings and recognized the benefit of a comprehensive training on the availability and abuse of illicit, prescription and over-the-counter drugs for those responding to fires and medical emergencies. Boyd had collaborated with Community Service Programs, Inc. Project Positive Action Toward Health (CSP Project PATH) on citywide alcohol and other drug abuse prevention activities over the past four years,

and viewed them as an effective resource to design the training he desired.

Irene Umipig, Health Educator, CSP Project PATH worked with

Boyd to develop a training curriculum that incorporated the signs and symptoms of illicit, prescription, over-the-counter drugs and alcohol abuse; the visual characteristics and names of street

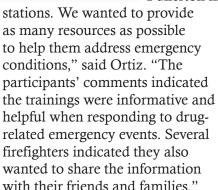
drugs; and the brand names of the most often abused prescription and over-the-counter drugs. Boyd developed a drug education post-training written exam based on the training curriculum to qualify participants for department certification.

Heidi Ortiz, Health Educator with CSP Project PATH, and Umipig trained 180 firefighters in three-days. "We trained 20 firefighters in each of nine three-hour sessions," said Umipig. "Fifteen minutes into our first training, half the participants left because of an

overdose emergency call-out. The timing of this call-out validated the importance of the training."

"In addition to the training materials, we gave the firefighters a

mobile drug identification reference guide designed for professionals to be placed in each of the trucks at the six Fullerton fire



For more information on first responder drug education training, please contact Irene Umipig, 714/441-0807, email: iumipig@cspinc.org.



#### **ADEPT**

County of Orange Health Care Agency Headquarters 405 W. Fifth Street #211

> Santa Ana, CA 92701 714/834-4058

Web site: ochealthinfo.com/adept



