

# PRESS RELEASE

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## PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE AND ABUSE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JACKSON (October 2009)** – Push down and turn, line up the arrows and hold down tab and turn are a few of the methods pharmaceutical companies have used to child proof medicine bottles. In a recent test conducted by NBC, 10 kindergarten students were given child proof medicine bottles and two successfully opened the bottles in less than 12 seconds. Despite the warning labels and child proof containers, thousands of children become very ill or die as a result of ingesting small to large amounts of prescription drugs (whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).

Prescription drug misuse and abuse is cause for great concern among teenagers as well. As of 2008, teens cite prescription drugs as the second most accessible drugs available to them, after marijuana (Monitoring the Future survey 2008). One in six teens reported that they took a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them (Monitoring the Future survey 2008).

Teens also view the drugs as 'safe' highs because they are prescribed by a doctor. The addictive potential of prescription drugs is the same as that of illegal drugs -- such as cocaine or heroin -- and the consequences of use can be severe. Opioid (analgesic/narcotic) drugs are the most commonly misused of prescription drugs.

Symptoms of prescription drug misuse or abuse depend upon the category of drug the person is taking. Opioid painkiller abuse includes constipation, depression, low blood pressure, decreased respiration rate and confusion. Sedative and tranquilizer abuse include drowsiness, confusion, unsteady gait, impaired judgment and involuntary and rapid movement of the eyeball. Stimulant abuse includes weight loss, agitation, irritability, insomnia, high blood pressure and irregular heartbeat.

Keeping our children away from prescription drugs is going to take more than child proof containers and hiding them in the house. Parents need to talk openly with their children about the dangers of taking prescription drugs, specifically when they are misused or not prescribed specifically for them. Parents also need to keep medication in a place where the children do not have access (preferably a locked cabinet) and all medications that are expired, or no longer needed, should be disposed of properly.

For additional information about prescription drug safety and the signs and symptoms of drug abuse, go to [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).

### **You can also contact:**

- Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition at (517) 796-5133 or [khaynes@uwjackson.org](mailto:khaynes@uwjackson.org)
- Breakout Drug Education Program at (517) 612-2512 or [shelly@breakoutdrugfree.org](mailto:shelly@breakoutdrugfree.org)