



The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System  
Serving New Jersey Since 1983

Designated regional poison center  
for New Jersey by New Jersey  
Department of Health and Senior  
Services and the American  
Association of Poison Control  
Centers

## Adolescents and Medicine Abuse

### NATIONAL MEDICINE ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

#### PRESS RELEASE

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**Newark, New Jersey-** A resolution introduced into the U.S. Senate by Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs, was recently passed designating August 2007 as “National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month.” The Senate encourages both parental and community awareness of the rising concern of the intentional abuse of medicines (prescription and over-the-counter).

The current research paints a frightening picture for parents around the country. The latest study conducted by the Partnership for a Drug Free America concluded that more than 1/3 of teens believe that using prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications to “get high” is safer than using illicit street drugs. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Survey on Drug Use & Health, the 4 types of prescription medications that are most commonly abused are pain relievers, stimulants, sedatives, and tranquilizers.

The New Jersey Poison Control Center is often asked to consult on medicine abuse cases. Recently, a 15 year old was admitted to a local hospital suffering from hallucinations, the result of her intentionally abusing over-the-counter cough medicine from her family’s medicine cabinet. The Partnership’s study also reported that 1 in 10 teens (about 2.4 million) intentionally took cough medicine to “get high”. It is all too common for teenagers to hold “fishing parties” in which they raid the family medicine cabinet in search of mind altering drugs.

By calling attention to this national problem, NJPIES hopes to encourage health professionals to educate their communities about the serious and life-threatening consequences of abusing prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

*For further information, please visit the following websites:*

- [www.chpa-infoo.org](http://www.chpa-infoo.org)
- [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)
- [www.DoseofPrevention.org](http://www.DoseofPrevention.org)
- [www.drugfree.com](http://www.drugfree.com)
- [www.FiveMoms.com](http://www.FiveMoms.com)
- [www.StopMedicineAbuse.org](http://www.StopMedicineAbuse.org)

**Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!**

located at University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey