



## KEY FINDINGS OF 19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL: PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY

### *“Increased Need for Ongoing Parent/Teen Discussions in a Changing Drug Landscape”*

---

The Partnership’s national survey shows the number of discussions between parents and teens about the dangers and risks of using drugs and alcohol has decreased significantly. More alarming is the misperception among many parents that the abuse of RX/OTC medications is safer than the use of illegal drugs.

#### **PATS 2006 – Key Findings:**

Frequent discussions about the dangers and risks of using drugs and alcohol between parents and teens are decreasing. As teens continue to intentionally abuse medicines to get high, parents are aware of the threat, but are not taking action.

- *12 percent decline in frequent (four or more) conversations between parents and teens about the dangers of drug and alcohol use;*

Parents are not covering the new drug trends including the abuse of Rx/OTC medications.

- *Half of parents (54 percent) reported in-depth discussions about the abuse of drugs like heroin, cocaine, crack with their kids.*
- *Yet only 36 percent of parents reported having in-depth conversations about abuse of prescription medications and 33 percent have thoroughly discussed abuse of OTC cough and cold medicines with their teens.*

Parents have misconceptions about teens’ abuse of Rx/OTC medicines.

- *Nearly one in five teens, 4.5 million, has abused prescription medicine; and 1 in 10 has abused cough and cold medicines, some containing the active ingredient dextromethorphan, or DXM.<sup>1</sup>*
- *27 percent of parents (3 out of 10) feel that Rx and OTC medicine are much safer to use than illegal drugs;*
- *22 percent of parents (1 out of 5) believe teens use Rx pain relievers because parents feel Rx medicines are safer to abuse than illegal drugs.*

Parents need help talking to their kids about living healthy drug-free lives and about understanding current drug trends.

- *One-third of parents have a need for more information about drugs;*
- *30 percent of parents need tips on how to start a discussion about drugs;*
- *37 percent need information on how to tell if a child is using drugs.*

#### **Troubling Trends:**

- Parents underestimate teen drug trials; Parents are less likely to think their teen tried drugs than teens actually report;
- Parents reported covering the risks of illicit drugs thoroughly(54 percent) ; however, they do not discuss the risks of prescription and cough and cold medicine abuse to the same degree with their teens (36 and 33 percent)
- While a vast majority of parents are aware of new drugs threats like teens' intentional abuse of medicines, parents aren't taking action to safeguard their children from drug and alcohol use.
- Parents are in need of more information and resources to help them take action and to help them feel more comfortable having in depth discussions with their teens about the risks of drug and alcohol use.

#### **Main Substances of Concern:**

- Prescription drugs (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives)
- Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines (dextromethorphan, or DXM)

---

<sup>1</sup> PATS Teens 2005