

**PARTNERSHIP FOR A DRUG-FREE AMERICA®
KEY FINDINGS OF:
18th ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY
on TEEN DRUG ABUSE 2005**

“Generation Rx: A Culture of Pharming Takes Root”

For the second year in a row, the Partnership’s national survey reveals alarming statistics that reflect the entrenchment of intentional abuse of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medications to get high by today’s teen population.

Key Findings:

- Abuse of Rx/OTC medicines is now so prevalent it is **“normalized”** among teens.
 - *(One in five) or 4.5 million teens have tried prescription medication to get high;*
 - *(One in 10) or 2.4 million teens report abusing cough medicine to get high.*
- Teens mistakenly believe abusing Rx medicines is **safe**.
 - *Half of teens do not see a great risk in abuse;*
 - *40 percent of teens (2 out of 5) agree that Rx medicines, even if they are not prescribed by a doctor, are much safer to use than illegal drugs;*
 - *51 percent of teens say a reason why teens abuse Rx pain relievers is because “they are not illegal drugs;”*
 - *35 percent of teens give “they are safer to use than illegal drugs” as a reason why teens would abuse Rx pain relievers;*
 - *32 percent of teens give “fewer side effects than street drugs” as a reason why teens would abuse Rx pain relievers.*
- *Only 45 percent of teens agree strongly that “taking cough medicine to get high is risky”*

FOR RELEASE: May 17, 2006

- Teens report ***Rx and OTC medicines*** for abuse are readily available, in friends'/family's **medicine cabinets** or on the **Internet**.
 - *Over half of teens agree prescription drugs are easier to get than illegal drugs.*
- Parents are crucial to helping prevent/intervene with this problem, but are largely unaware and ill-equipped to respond.
 - *Only 31 percent of teens “learn a lot about the risk of drugs” from their parents;*
 - *Kids who learn a lot about the risk of drugs from their parents are up to half as likely to use drugs.*

Troubling Trends:

- Pharming - Kids “getting high” abusing Rx or OTC drugs;
- It has never been easier to get high - Internet accessibility and loose e-commerce enforcement are enabling easy acquisition;
- Parents do not understand the behavior of intentionally abusing medicine to get high;
- Parents are not discussing the risks of abuse of prescription and/or non-prescription cough medicine with their children;
- Three out of five parents report discussing marijuana “a lot” with their children, but only a third of parents report discussing the risks of using prescription medicines or non-prescription cold or cough medicine to get high.

Main Substances of Concern:

- Methamphetamine (stimulant)
- Inhalants (inhaled fumes)
- Prescription drugs (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives)
- OTC drugs (antitussives, CNS stimulants, antihistamines)