

## Study Finds Parents See Connection Between Rx Abuse and Rising Heroin Abuse in NJ

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New Statewide Survey results released by the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) found that parents see their own home as being a top source for their children to access alcohol.

However, the same survey found that parents do not see their home as an access point for prescription and over-the-counter drugs – despite the fact that a majority of parents recognize that the abuse of prescription narcotics contributes to the increase in heroin abuse rates in New Jersey.

The 8th PDFNJ bi-annual Tracking Study of Parent Attitude and Behavior in Alcohol and Drug Abuse, found New Jersey parents who feel that kids get prescription and over-the-counter drugs out of home medicine cabinets has dropped a significant 19 percent since 2012.

The Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse's 2014 Heroin Task Force Report found that the number of drug-related deaths in the state is skyrocketing, rising 53 percent from 2010 to 2012, with more than two-thirds of those fatalities involving prescription drug abuse.

Parents' behaviors toward managing unused, unwanted and expired medication have changed little since 2012:

- 58 percent of NJ Parents have not taken an inventory of their prescription and OTC medicine in the past two months.
- 84 percent of parents reported they have not disposed of unused, unwanted, and expired medicine

On a positive note, the study finds significant **increase** -- in the number of parents who have talked to their children about the proper use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs such cough syrup or pain relievers.

"All parents in New Jersey must take heed and talk to their children because prescription drug abuse could be happening in your homes – unfortunately, no family is immune from this epidemic

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and PDFNJ encourages all parents to secure their medicine cabinets, take inventory of the medicine in the home, safely dispose of their unneeded and unwanted medicine and talk to their children," said Elaine Pozycki, Co-Chair of the PDFNJ Board of Directors.

PDFNJ has created a multi-media public service campaign to help get this message out to parents about their role in preventing prescription drug abuse, the signs and symptoms they should notice, and what to do if you suspect your child is abusing opiates. The campaign centers around the website [TalkNowNJ.Com](http://TalkNowNJ.Com) which features the testimonials of four New Jersey mothers who have been personally impacted by their child's addiction that began with prescription drug use.

"PDFNJ is focusing our media efforts over the next 12 months of getting this information out to parents in New Jersey because the message of [TalkNowNJ.Com](http://TalkNowNJ.Com) will help save lives," according to Angelo M. Valente, PDFNJ Executive Director. He noted that the website also features a quiz for parents to take to evaluate their knowledge of the signs of opiate abuse.

### Public Service Campaigns Continue to Positively Influence New Jersey

- More than eight in ten parents (82%) say the ads encouraged them to talk to their children about using drugs or alcohol.
- Seven in ten say the ads made them more aware of the risks of using drugs and alcohol.
- A majority of parents feel that the anti-drug ads have given them new information or told them things they didn't know about drugs or alcohol.
- The more frequent the exposure to anti-drug ads, the greater the likelihood that a parent was encouraged to talk to their children about the risk of using drugs and alcohol.

The Caucus Education Television, CBS Outdoor, New Jersey Transit, New York-New Jersey PATH, and the New Jersey Broadcasters Association are among the many media organizations that have partnered with PDFNJ to get the substance abuse prevention PSAs to the residents of New Jersey.