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Clinton Foundation Aims to Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse Among College Students

Former President Bill Clinton this week pledged his foundation will work with the New York Police Department (NYPD) and other partners to address prescription drug abuse, with a focus on college students.

The Clinton Foundation hopes within five years to cut in half the number of young adults ages 18 to 26 who misuse prescription drugs for the first time, the New York Daily News reports. The foundation will recruit colleges to join a Prescription Safe Campus Initiative to implement best practices designed to reduce prescription drug abuse. "This is insane to have the brightest of our young people dropping out under conditions of which their addiction has not been treated or their abuse is out of ignorance," Clinton said on Monday.

The program will include prevention education programming, student-led awareness campaigns, and increased substance abuse and mental health services on campuses that participate, according to a foundation news release.

NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly announced the department will work with colleges and universities in New York City to increase awareness about prescription drug abuse during freshman orientation.

Prescription drugs are the third most commonly abused category of drugs, behind alcohol and marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. Some prescription drugs can become addictive, especially when used in a manner inconsistent with their labeling by someone other than the patient for whom they were prescribed, or when taken in a manner or dosage other than prescribed. Overall, an estimated 48 million people have abused prescription drugs, representing nearly 20% of the U.S. population. Click here to learn more.