

Ohio Governor Urges Parents to Talk to Children About Dangers of Drug Abuse



Ohio is launching a new initiative to encourage parents to speak with their children about the dangers of drug abuse.

The increased use of prescription painkillers and heroin has led to a surge in drug overdoses in the state, the Associated Press reports.

Governor John Kasich announced the state initiative, called "Start Talking," designed to deliver information about drug abuse to middle and high school students. The campaign includes a website for parents and school leaders, which directs them to free resources from The Partnership at Drugfree.org. The materials aim to make adults more confident in speaking to children about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Tracy Plouck, Director of the state's Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, said parents often are unaware of drug use among their children and their friends. "Many young people haven't been exposed to that sort of temptation prior to the middle-school years," she said. "We really want to make sure that parents are having really open, honest and candid discussions with their children by that point."

As part of the initiative, members of the State Highway Patrol and the Ohio National Guard will meet with high school athletes, and encourage them to talk with their classmates about staying drug free. The state will be funding grants for drug prevention efforts by schools and nonprofits in low-income areas.

"We're making real progress in fighting prescription drug abuse in Ohio, because we made up our minds to fight the problem head on," Governor Kasich said in a news release. "But we still have more work to do because illicit drug abuse remains a huge problem in our state. Our law enforcement agencies are fighting to curb abuse on the supply end, and each of us as parents can do our part by talking to our children."

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