

# PRESCRIPTION DRUG



# TAKE BACK EVENT

## A Planning Toolkit for Law Enforcement



**Presented by:**

Arkansas State Drug Director's Office  
1 State Police Plaza Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72209  
Office: (501) 618-8693  
Fax: (501) 618-8841



Dear Arkansas Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, Drug Task Force Coordinators and Law Enforcement Officials,

As many of you are already aware, the Office of the Drug Director, the Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police, the Arkansas Sheriffs Association, the Arkansas State Police, and many other invested agencies, community groups, prevention resource centers, and businesses, have begun a statewide youth prescription drug abuse prevention campaign.

In preparing for the campaign, we learned that many of your agencies have already hosted or are planning your own community prescription drug take-back event. For those of you who have not yet held an event such as this, we have also become aware of some very exciting information that we would like to share with you.

We would like to offer the enclosed toolkit to assist you in planning your own take-back event. The toolkit includes a step-by-step outline encompassing everything from pre-operation planning to the destruction of collected drugs, and provides sample letters for your use for sponsorship requests and DEA authorization, sample media releases, and a host of additional information you will find extremely useful.

Additionally, Wal-Mart is generously contributing a supply of \$5 gift cards to be given as incentives for people to return unused, unneeded, or unwanted prescription drugs at community take-back events, and we would like to strongly encourage your agency to partner with your region's designated Prevention Resource Center to take advantage of this opportunity. The ability for law enforcement to provide these gift cards has been proven to tremendously increase the turnout at events like this nationwide. The requirements for an agency which would like to receive a supply of incentive gift cards are included in the outline.

Prescription drug take back events are an excellent service to your communities for many reasons. They provide an opportunity for citizens to legally discard their meds in an environmentally safe manner while keeping them out of the hands of their children. Many well-intentioned people have absolutely no idea what to do with their old meds, and these events are extremely helpful to them and a wonderful public service opportunity for law enforcement agencies.

Again, we would like encourage you to plan a take-back event in your area. Please feel free to contact me at 501-554-9357 if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,

Frances Flener  
Arkansas Drug Director

# PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK EVENT PLANNING OUTLINE

## Pre-Operation Preparation

To be successful, law enforcement agencies should prepare for these operations a minimum of 90 days in advance to allow for proper approval and advertisement of the event.

## Partners

Law enforcement agencies should obtain and secure partners for operation. (i.e., other law enforcement agencies, Hometown Health officials assigned by the Arkansas Department of Health, and local Prevention Resource Centers)

## Basics

Secure the following:

- 1. Wal-Mart Sponsorship**—Wal-Mart will fund five-dollar gift cards, as their Diversion Unit is heavily involved in these programs. An *Operation Order* (see attachment A) and sample flyer (see attachment G) must be completed and submitted for their approval.

**Point of Contact:**

Kathy Stowe  
Wal-Mart Health and Wellness Division  
702 South West 8th St.  
Bentonville, AR 72716-0110  
(E-mail) [kathy.stowe@wal-mart.com](mailto:kathy.stowe@wal-mart.com)  
1-479-277-2113

- 2. Drug Enforcement Administration**—An operation request letter must be sent to DEA requesting approval of the operation (see attachment C). The request should be made in such a way as to be applicable for a one-year time period, as opposed to a single event.

**Point of Contact:**

Lisa Barnhill  
Group Supervisor  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
Little Rock Field Office  
10825 Financial Centre Parkway  
Little Rock, AR 72211  
(E-mail) [lisa.r.barnhill@usdoj.gov](mailto:lisa.r.barnhill@usdoj.gov)  
1-501-217-6512  
(Fax) 501-217-6597



- 3. Research and secure destruction location from attached list** (see attachment F)—Agencies will need this information for the DEA letter outlined in item 2 above. Notify Allen Gilliam of Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality of your operation at 501-682-0625 or gilliam@adeq.state.ar.us.
- 4. Local News Media**—Make personal contact with your hometown newspaper, advising them of the operation and securing them as a sponsor. They can potentially provide artwork for flyers, advertise the operation, and create numerous news articles relating to the prescription drug abuse problem and the needs of this type of operation. Provide the media with contacts for stories, such as the State Drug Director's Office, State Health Department personnel involved in prescription drug abuse education, the local coroner, a cooperating emergency room physician, community leaders involved in this campaign, and/or families and victims that are willing to give their stories about the issue. Provide related website information.
- 5. Sonic Drive-Ins**—If possible, Sonic is a great sponsor of program, providing gift cards and free drink cards. Check with Sonic managers in the area.
- 6. Local Pharmacies**—Pharmacies are great sponsors for funding printing costs, distributing fliers, and putting fliers in prescription bags. They can provide prescription pill counting trays to assist in the actual pill count.
- 7. Seek out other businesses as partners**—Other businesses can potentially provide gift cards or funding for flyer printing and other related costs.
- 8. Select sites for operation**—It is recommended to use your law enforcement agency as a site to develop community relations. A secondary site could be a parking lot in a high traffic part of town. Find locations that aren't susceptible to weather. Try to select operation dates that do not conflict with other community events.
- 9. Develop flyer, use media source to develop flyer if possible**—If possible, develop flyers that would be small enough to be put in prescription bags, along with 8.5 x 11 inch flyers for community circulation. Look at the possibility to develop larger flyers for posters to be posted in community areas. (See attachment G)
- 10. Contact the State Drug Director's Office**—Contact the State Drug Director's Office at 501-618-8693 as a great resource for media and overall assistance and support of the operation. Use *Prescription Drug Talking Points* provided by this agency in media and community promotions. (See attachment I)

Advertising the operation is important to generate good community response. The following is a list of ideas to get the word out:

- 1. Local Chamber of Commerce**  
(They are a great resource for businesses and usually has a website.)
- 2. Local Health Department**
- 3. Local hospitals or medical clinics**
- 4. Civic organizations in jurisdiction** (Always look for speakers on programs that help the community and will support physically or monetarily.)
- 5. Radio stations**

- 6. Senior Adult Centers**
- 7. Facebook page**
- 8. Law enforcement website**
- 9. Local television stations**
- 10. Empower patrol officers to distribute flyers in the community**  
(This builds great community policing with businesses and neighborhoods.)
- 11. Neighborhood Associations and Community Watch Programs**
- 12. Prepare banners and signage for the operation date**

## **Operation Day**

- 1. Obtain and utilize containers for the prescription drugs collected.** Obtain a sharps container for all event sites. (Local hospitals are potential sources.) Obtain an electronic pill counter. (Potential sources are DEA, Arkansas Pharmacy Association, and/or local pharmacies.)
- 2. At least two assigned uniformed officers at each collection site.** Officers will be the only persons handling drugs. Follow DEA guidelines (see attachment B).
- 3. Volunteers can be used to hand out materials.** Gift cards should be disseminated throughout the sites. Utilize departmental advertisement bags containing gift cards and prescription abuse informational handouts. Volunteers could consist of community watch participants, business owners, sponsors, or partners. Public officials or political figures are a good draw, and it is a great opportunity for them to meet the public.
- 4. Volunteers could use costumes, signs, or other media gimmicks to attract attention in high traffic areas.**
- 5. Have a designated patrol vehicle to pick up collected drugs at each site every hour or so and deliver them to the law enforcement agency to be secured.** This will maintain security at the site.
- 6. If possible, have designated law enforcement personnel who will be counting, identifying, documenting, and securing the drugs as they come into the law enforcement agency.** Media sometimes wants to know figures as soon as possible.
- 7. Have giveaways for children at each site, such as stick-on badges, pencils, etc.**
- 8. Inform community members that the drugs must be destroyed per DEA regulations and that it is illegal to redistribute them and, if necessary, that quality control issues are the reason for this law.** (Some community members who return prescription drugs might express a desire for the drugs to be contributed to a charitable organization for redistribution.)
- 9. Secure all collected drugs at the end of the operation at department evidence location.** Follow departmental evidence procedure.
- 10. Return borrowed equipment.** Return sharps containers to hospitals for destruction.

## Post Operations

- 1. Sort, count and document all drugs using law enforcement officers only.**
- 2. Prepare drugs to be displayed for a press release.** Make sure that pill bottle labels are not disclosed on media releases. Invite partners, sponsors, and other participants to media release. Be sure to disclose destruction preparation in release. (See attachment H)
- 3. Prepare and obtain court order for destruction.** (See attachment D.) The court order should contain a listed inventory of all items obtained during the operation.
- 4. Prepare a departmental file on the operation, including an incident report outlining the operation, count of drugs recovered, and photographs of drugs recovered.** A complete listing of drugs obtained, all pertinent request and authorization letters, and court destruction orders should be kept on record at all times.
- 5. Destroy drugs obtained at designated disposal site.** Check with the disposal site to see if media can witness the destruction. Some disposal sites encourage this because it enhances the community relations of the disposal company.
- 6. Do a media release of the disposal itself to include all related pill bottles, etc.** This builds community assurance that the project was successfully completed. Media photos and/or video of the drugs being destroyed enhance public confidence.
- 7. Prepare letters of appreciation to those involved.**

### For Additional Information:

Chief Kirk Lane  
Benton Police Department  
501-776-5983  
chieflane@bentonar.org

Steve Varady  
Office of the Drug Director  
501-618-8693  
[steve.varady@asp.arkansas.gov](mailto:steve.varady@asp.arkansas.gov)

### Attachments

Attachment A—Sample Letter to Wal-Mart  
Attachment B—DEA Authorization Requirements  
Attachment C—Operation Request Letter to DEA  
Attachment D—Property Disposition Form  
Attachment E—Destruction Letter  
Attachment F—List of Arkansas Destruction Sites  
Attachment G—Flyer Sample  
Attachment H—Media Release Sample  
Attachment I—Prescription Drug Abuse Talking Points

**ATTACHMENT A:**  
**SAMPLE LETTER TO WAL-MART**

To: Kathy Stowe, Wal-Mart Health and Wellness Division

From: Chief Kirk Lane

Date: 12-20-2009

Ref: Operation Medicine Cabinet

Recent activities in our city and surrounding area have indicated a potential increase in prescription drug abuse among adults as well as school aged youth. This is not an issue unique to our area, but becoming and epidemic nation-wide.

The Benton Police Department will be organizing a community service event aimed at educating our general public, parents, and school officials. We will be setting up collection points for individuals to drop off unwanted, old, or expired prescription medication.

We are asking for your support in the form of providing gift cards, of a nominal value, to provide to participants, who surrender these drugs. We have contacted several local businesses for financial support. We are scheduling this event to be a regional event, in conjunction with Bryant Police Department and the Saline County Hometown Health Coalition, with the collection taking place on Saturday, February 6, 2010.

We will be setting up four (4) collection sites, which will be at each police department and a community site in each jurisdiction. Each collection point will be manned by a uniformed officer and volunteers from the Saline County Hometown Health Coalition for the duration of the collection point operation.

All drugs turned in will be inventoried, documented, secured, and destroyed following departmental policies and procedures and in accordance with Arkansas State Law.

This event will be heavily publicized in the local communities and schools. With your corporate support and community involvement, we expect this event to produce a record turnout.

We are looking forward to you joining in helping us to keep these prescription drugs off of the streets, out of our schools, and serving our local communities.

Sincerely,

Kirk R. Lane  
Chief of Police  
Benton Police Department

**ATTACHMENT B:**  
**DEA REQUIREMENTS**

1. In each instance in which a controlled substance is collected, a duly authorized and certified law enforcement officer who is a full-time employee of (insert Police Department name) shall be responsible for supervising the collection. If necessary, another duly authorized and certified law enforcement officer may be substituted for the first officer during the course of the event.
2. Starting when any controlled substances are first collected and continuing until the controlled substances are turned over for destruction (as set forth below in paragraph 4), the following shall occur: (a) the law enforcement officer referred to in paragraph 1 shall, at all times, have sole control over, and sole possession of, all controlled substances collected and the box in which the collected controlled substances are stored; and (b) at no time shall anyone other than the law enforcement officer referred to in paragraph 1 have access to the box or the collected controlled substances other than for the purpose of depositing controlled substances into the box.
3. Only pharmaceutical drugs may be collected and stored in the box, illicitly manufactured controlled substances (such as marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, MDMA, and LSD) may not be collected as part of this program. In the event a person seeks to turn in an illicitly manufactured controlled substances, the law enforcement officer shall follow the standard procedures implemented by his/her agency for the collection and handling of illegal controlled substances.
4. The law enforcement officer referred to in paragraph 1 shall be responsible for ensuring that the controlled substances are turned over to the appropriate officials within his/her agency for disposal in accordance with standard policies and procedures utilized by the agency for destruction of controlled substances.
5. Any methods utilized by the agency to destroy the collected controlled substances must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, applicable laws and regulations relating to public health and the environment.

**ATTACHMENT C:**  
**OPERATION REQUEST LETTER TO DEA**

February 5, 2010

Mr. Jimmy S. Fox III  
Special Agent in Charge  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
3838 North Causeway Boulevard, Suite 1800  
Metairie, LA 70002

SAC Fox,

During the 2010 calendar year the Benton, Bryant, and Saline County Sheriff's Office are planning several prescription drug take back programs under the name Operation Medicine Cabinet. These are law enforcement operations in which officers from three police departments located in Saline County will actively participate in. Sponsors throughout the state of Arkansas were obtained to fund these operations. The hours of operation for each event may vary. The following guidelines will be strictly adhered to:

- 1.) In each instance in which a controlled substance is collected, a duly authorized and certified law enforcement officer who is full-time employee of the Benton Police Department shall be responsible for supervising the collection. If necessary, another duly authorized and certified law enforcement officer may be substituted for the first officer during the course of the event.
- 2.) Starting when any controlled substances are first collected and continuing until the controlled substances are turned over for destruction the following shall occur: Officers of the Benton Police Department shall, at all times, have sole control over, and sole possession of, all controlled substances collected and the box in which the collected controlled substances are stored; and at no time shall anyone other than the law enforcement officers of the Benton Police Department have access to the box or the collected controlled substances other than for the purpose of depositing controlled substances into the box.
- 3.) During this take-back program, the Benton Police Department will only collect and store pharmaceutical drugs. Illicitly manufactured controlled substances (such as marijuana, heroin, methamphetamine, MDMA, and LSD) will not be collected as part of this program. In the event a person seeks to turn in an illicitly manufactured controlled substance, officers of the Benton Police Department shall follow the standard procedures implemented by our agency for the collection and handling of illegal controlled substances.
- 4.) Officers of the Benton Police Department shall be responsible for ensuring the controlled substances are turned over to the appropriate officials within the Benton Police Department for disposal in accordance with standard policies and procedures utilized by the Benton Police Department for destruction of controlled substances.
- 5.) Our intent is to seek a destruction order from our court to properly dispose of the pharmaceutical drugs collected during our take-back program. We have a certified hazardous waste disposal site here within our city limits that are certified through the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality named Rineco. We will maintain a list and accounting of prescription drug amounts collected and destroyed at the Benton Police Department at the completion of our operation.

We would respectfully request your permission and endorsement of this needed operation.

Respectfully,

Kirk R. Lane  
Chief of Police

**ATTACHMENT D:**  
**PROPERTY DISPOSITION FORM**

Judge: \_\_\_\_\_

Benton Police Department Property Disposition Form
--

Incident #: \_\_\_\_\_ Incident Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Victim: \_\_\_\_\_ Ticket # / Docket #: \_\_\_\_\_

Suspect: \_\_\_\_\_ Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: _____ Item#: _____ Bin #: _____
Check One:
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold 30 days for appeal, if appeal not filed dispose of per departmental policies.
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold as Evidence, Court/Date: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Release to Owner, Owner Name: _____ Date Notified: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dispose of per departmental policies: _____
Judge: _____ Date: _____

Case Notes/Status:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EVIDENCE DESTRUCTION**  
**WITNESS VERIFICATION**

SIGNATURE	ID#

**DATE DESTROYED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT E:**  
**DESTRUCTION LETTER**

On February 6th, 2010 the Benton Police Department, Bryant Police Department, the Saline County Sheriff's Office and the Saline County Substance Use and Abuse Subcommittee held the first annual unused medication collection drive. The event, titled Operation Medicine Cabinet was held cooperatively between all agencies at locations in the cities of Benton and Bryant AR.

Operation Medicine Cabinet allowed persons the opportunity to dispose of their unwanted and or unused medications in exchange for redeemable gift cards.

This event yielded approximately 52,339 dosage units of medications. The medications consist of Over the Counter medications, DEA Scheduled I through V controlled medications and non-controlled medications. All medications were voluntarily forfeited and are not involved in any criminal proceeding.

The Benton Police Department respectfully requests that authority be granted for the timely and safe destruction of these medications. Destruction will be handled by outside agencies governed by all local, state and federal laws within their prescribed guidelines.

Thank you for your assistance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judge's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ATTACHMENT F:**  
**DRUG DESTRUCTION SITES**

There are two commercial/licensed Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (hazardous waste) treatment facilities serving Arkansas\*:

**1) Clean Harbors – El Dorado Incineration Facility**

Point of Contact – Ms. Treasa Evans, 870-863-7173

Physical / Mailing Address:

309 American Circle

El Dorado, AR 71730

Main Phone: 870-863-7173

Fax: 870-864-3730

Website: <http://www.cleanharbors.com/locations/index.asp?id=185>

**2) Rineco Chemical Industries, Inc. – Benton**

Point of Contact – Ms. Marsha Tisdale, 501-778-6325

Mailing Address

Post Office Box 729

Benton, AR 72018

Physical Address

Rineco Chemical Industries, Inc.

819 Vulcan Road

Benton, AR 72015

Main Phone: 501-778-9089

Toll Free: 1-800-377-4692

Fax: 501-778-8505

Website: <http://www.rineco.com/>

\*Source: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality

**ATTACHMENT G:  
SAMPLE FLYER**

The Benton & Bryant  
Police Departments, the  
Saline County Sheriff's  
Office and the Saline  
County Substance Use &  
Abuse Subcommittee  
invite parents to...



# OPERATION MEDICINE CABINET

**Get rid of old meds & PROTECT your children  
from prescription drug abuse and misuse**

Turn in your old/unused medications, no questions asked!  
In exchange, get a \$5 Walmart gift card & free Sonic drinks\*

**9 a.m. - 5 p.m, Saturday, Feb. 6, 2010**

**Drop off your prescriptions at any of four locations:**

- Ferguson's Furniture parking lot off Military Road in Benton
- Benton Police Department, 114 S. East St.
- Bryant Police Department, 312 Roya Lane
- Bryant City Hall, 210 S.W. 3rd St.

Sponsored also by:

\* While supplies last



**ATTACHMENT H:**  
**SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE**

**Operation Success; Medicine Cabinet Nets Over 50K Pills**

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

More than 50,000 prescription pills, syrups, needles and other forms of drugs are now out of local medicine cabinets — and out of the reach of drug abusers and experimenting teenagers' hands — thanks to last weekend's Operation Medicine Cabinet.

"I think the community really showed they are aware of the problem we are facing today with prescription drug abuse," Saline County Sheriff Bruce Pennington said. "And it is not just in Saline County, it is all over the place in Arkansas and beyond."

The sheriff's office on Saturday joined forces with the Benton and Bryant police departments in an attempt to rid Saline County of out-of-date and unused prescription medicines. The law enforcement agencies spent about 8 hours at four locations — two in Benton and two in Bryant — collecting the drugs "no questions asked" and in exchange handing out gift certificates from event co-sponsors Walmart and Sonic Drive-In.

In all, Operation Medicine Cabinet netted the collection of 50,142.5 pills, said Benton Police Lt. Kevin Russell. Officers just completed counting all the drugs late Tuesday, and they are still working on putting a dollar amount on the medicines collected. After finally getting a total, Russell said the drugs will be destroyed.

"It is absolutely amazing how many medications we got, because other (law enforcement) agencies did this same event in Northwest Arkansas last year, and they only got around 18,000 medications," Benton Lt. Kevin Russell said. "We nearly tripled that amount! The people in our communities really pulled together to keep the medicines out of teens' hands."

Russell added, "This is one way to get the temptations of prescription drugs out of homes and out of the wrong people's hands. It is another way to keep our communities safer."

Prescription drugs, when taken properly, can tremendously help heal people with everything from the flu or back pain to rare diseases.

But a growing problem in Saline County and other locales is people — especially teenagers — stealing and abusing prescription medicines from their family medicine cabinets. It is extremely prevalent in the local school hallways, and illegal prescription drugs are far too easy to obtain from our own homes, Benton Police Chief Kirk Lane said.

"This is a prescription take-back program," he said. "We want to change the mindset of the community. We not only need to lock up our medications in our homes, but we need to get as many out of the homes as possible. People might not realize there is an epidemic with the youth abusing prescription drugs."

Bryant Police Chief Tony Coffman said that the total number of medicines collected in just a half of one day is both encouraging and alarming.

“It is kind of an eye-opener that people had that much medications in their homes,” he said. “We never realized or imagined we could get that many medications, but it sounds like the residents in our communities are getting the message. We got a lot of traffic throughout the day in spurts and right at 5 p.m., when we were shutting it down, people were still coming to the Bryant Police Department and dropping off medications.”

Coffman believes a major reason for the success of the first Operation Medicine Cabinet is due to everyone getting involved putting the word out to the public about the program’s intentions. He says that when he visited the Bryant Senior Activity Center a few days before the event, the seniors there told him something that shocked even him.

“I asked them to give me a show of hands of how many of them have medicines in their cabinets that they don’t know what they are,” Coffman said. “I think just about every one of them raised their hands. After that, they really told me what a great idea the program is to keep their own homes safer by keeping as many medicines out as possible.”

Coffman added, “I appreciate all the local law enforcement officers working this and all the articles the Courier put out. It took all of us working together to make this such a great success.”

Lane said that in the near future, the Benton Police Department plans to put a prescription drop box outside its offices. He said people may not feel comfortable dropping off prescription medications with police in person, but he wants to change that.

“It is just a drop-off point; you don’t have to fill out any forms, and we won’t take your picture or anything,” Lane said. “There are not strings attached.”

Lane said some people may think that they should just flush old medications down their drains, but that creates another problem: pollution of our water systems.

Pennington also said that in the future, he hopes to set up Operation Medicine Cabinet events in other areas.

“I would like to incorporate more of the county to get involved and make their driving times much shorter,” he said. “I am talking about getting all the way out to Crows, Paron, Haskell, back up to Shannon Hills and everywhere in the county. I think if we get out all over Saline County it will benefit everyone even more, but this past weekend was a total success. That is attributed to all the various departments, at least the big three, working hand-in-hand and making sure the word got out to everyone in the community.”

Arkansas Drug Czar Fran Flener said that besides the Operation Medicine Cabinet campaign, the community needs to be educated on the dangers of youth abusing prescription medications. She said the means of how teens are getting the medications has to be addressed with parents and guardians.

“We need to treat our prescription medications like fine jewelry or a loaded gun,” Flener said. “I think we definitely have to educate not only the youth, but all society. When people dropped off prescription medications at Operation Medicine Cabinet, they removed the temptation from the homes. Now people need to talk to the youth. The young people aren’t ignorant; they have the ability to learn

about prescription drug abuse. Give them a reason to make a better choice — and it takes everyone on board teaching the same message.”

Operation Medicine Cabinet was sponsored by Walmart Stores Inc., Sonic Drive-In, Smith Caldwell Drug Store and The Courier. Lane said the Saline County Substance Abuse Committee, a subcommittee of the Saline County Hometown Health Coalition comprised of local volunteers, was also a funding source for the program.

For more information about Operation Medicine Cabinet, call Lane or Russell at 776-5948.

**<http://www.bentoncourier.com/content/view/204682/1/>**

# **ATTACHMENT I:**

## **TALKING POINTS**

### **The Growing Problem**

- Arkansas has the worst teen prescription pain reliever abuse problem in the entire United States. (SAMHSA, 2007, as reported in ONDCP *Teens and Prescription Drugs* report, Feb. 2007)
- By the time Arkansas high school students have reached their senior year, 22% have abused prescription drugs. (Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment [APNA], 2008)
- Close to 10% of Arkansas high school seniors reported non-medical use of prescription drugs in the past thirty days. (APNA, 2008)
- The rate of past 30-day sedative use among Arkansas seniors is roughly three times the national rate. (DHS, *Adolescent Prescription Drug Misuse in Arkansas*, June 2009)
- Arkansas sixth graders abuse prescription drugs more than any other substance except alcohol and cigarettes. (APNA, 2008)
- Over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse is rapidly increasing in earlier grades and at a rate comparable to, but faster than alcohol and cigarettes. (DBHS, *Special Report on Over the Counter and Prescription Drug Use Among Arkansas Students*, unreleased)
- Arkansas has consistently ranked among the ten states with the highest rate of non-medical use of pain relievers by twelve to twenty-year old individuals since state estimates of this measure first began in 2002. (SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, *Short Report on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues - Arkansas*, December, 2008).
- Nationwide, prescription pain relievers have more first-time users than any illicit drug, including marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, inhalants, LSD, Meth, Heroin, and PCP. (SAMHSA, NSDUH, 2007)
- Seven of the 10 drugs most abused by high school seniors are prescription or over-the-counter drugs acquired primarily from teens' friends or relatives. (NIDA, *Monitoring the Future*, 2009)

### **Preventing Youth Prescription Drug Abuse: A Matter of Life and Death**

- Accidental drug overdose deaths in Arkansas rose 195% from 1999 to 2004, which reflects the 4th highest increase in the United States. Most of these overdoses were caused by prescription drugs, especially opioid pain relievers and sedatives. (Centers for Disease Control, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Feb. 9, 2007)
- In 2007, prescription drugs accounted for 6 of the top 10 drugs in Arkansas which caused overdose deaths, while 1 was an over the counter drug. (Arkansas Department of Health, 2007)
- Substance abuse occurs frequently in adolescence, causing injuries and deaths from motor vehicle accidents, homicide, and suicide. (American Medical Association, 2006)
- From 2003 to 2007, 15 Arkansas children aged 12 to 17 died as a result of overdose involving prescription drugs. The prescription pain relievers oxycodone and hydrocodone were listed as a cause of death for 7 of these children. (Arkansas Department of Health, 2009)
- An especially dangerous and potentially deadly combination results from prescription drugs used along with alcohol. Opiates plus alcohol may lead to severe respiratory distress and death. (NIDA, 2009).
- 49% of teens who abuse prescription painkillers also report use of two or more other drugs, and the most common one is alcohol (81%). (Wu, Pilowsky & Patkar, 2007 – as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008)

- Recent deaths attributed at least in part to prescription drugs include Michael Jackson, Anna Nicole Smith, and Heath Ledger. Others that are not so recent include Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and Judy Garland.

### **Why Do Kids Abuse Prescription Drugs?**

Among the reasons teens report use of drugs were:

- To deal with the pressures and stress of school (73%)
- To feel better about themselves (65%)
- To look cool (65%)
- To deal with problems at home (55%)
- Being high feels good (40%)
- Drugs are fun (26%) (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study, Teens 2007 Report*, August 2008)

Among the reasons teens report use of prescription painkillers were:

- To relax or relieve tension (56.4%)
- To feel good or get high (53.5%)
- To experiment, see what it's like (52.4%)
- To relieve physical pain (44.8%)
- To have a good time with friends (29.5%). (McCabe, Boyd, Cranford, Teter, *Journal of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 2008)

**Easy access** is of particular concern as it relates to prescription drugs.

Nationally:

- 64% of 12 to 17 year olds who obtained prescription pain relievers and prescription stimulants were given them, bought them, or stole them from friends or relatives. (NSDUH, 2007, as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008)
- 46% received prescription pain relievers for free from a relative or friend. (NSDUH, 2007, as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008.
- More than 3 of 5 teens report that prescription drugs are easy to get from parents' medicine cabinets. (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study*, August 2008, as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008)
- 1 in 5 teens share their prescription drugs with friends (Goldworthy & Mayhorn, 2009)
- In 2008, for the first time, teens reported that it is easier to get prescription drugs than beer. (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), *National Survey of American Attitudes of Substance Abuse*, 2008)

It is believed the Arkansas experience with easy access to prescription drugs at least mirrors the national experience, but may in fact be worse.

There is no shortage of access to prescription medicines in Arkansas homes. For calendar year 2008, per capita, Arkansas ranked:

- #2 in overall prescriptions, at 17.5 Rx drug/person
- #3 in Rx prescriptions to 0–18 year olds
- #1 in Rx prescriptions to 19–64 year olds
- #11 in Rx prescriptions to those over age 65 (Kaiser Foundation, 2008)

### **Perception/Myth of Safety**

- 41% of teens believe that prescription drugs are much safer to use than illicit drugs. (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study*, August 2008)
- 29% of teens believe prescription pain relievers are not addictive, even if not prescribed by a doctor. (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study*, August 2008, as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008)
- More than 1 in 4 parents believe that prescription and OTC drugs are much safer to abuse than street drugs. (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study*, August 2008, as reported in ONDCP *Prescription for Danger* report, Jan. 2008)

### **Which of our Kids are at Risk of Prescription Drug Abuse?**

- Youth prescription drug abuse does not occur in a vacuum. Kids with a high level of risk factors (such as availability of drugs, family conflict, parental attitude favorable towards drug use, poor performance in school, depression, etc.) are more apt to abuse drugs, while kids with a high level of protective factors (such as positive peers, religious involvement, academic accomplishment, involvement in pro-social activities, strong family environment, etc.) are more apt to not abuse.
- Prescription drugs, mainly due to their widespread availability, should be considered as a threat to all teens. Access is an issue, so a high level of protective factors should not provide parents false confidence that their children will not abuse.
- While all teens should be considered to be “at risk” for prescription drug abuse, a report by DHS, Division of Behavioral Health Services and Pride Surveys indicates that in Arkansas:
  - Girls abuse and are significantly more likely to abuse prescription drugs than boys. Typically, with alcohol and drug abuse, it is the reverse.
  - Students with indications of depression report significantly more over-the-counter and prescription drug abuse.
  - Children in foster care abuse prescription drugs more than children in any other type living situation. This does not hold true for alcohol and the majority of other drugs. (DHS, DBHS, and Pride Surveys, *Special Report on Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Use Among Arkansas Students*, 2009)
  - Children who smoke are 8.3 times as likely to report misusing prescription drugs in the previous 30 days as students who did not report smoking in the previous 30 days (DHS – DBHS, Arkansas Epi-Gram, April 2010)

## The Good News

- Nationally, non-medical use of prescription drugs experienced a slight decrease from 3.3 percent in 2007 to 2.9 percent in 2008 (SAMHSA, *2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*)
- Awareness is growing. Parents are recognizing the risks involved in youth prescription drug abuse much better than in previous years. (Partnership for a Drug-Free America and MetLife Foundation, *2008 Parents Attitude Tracking Study*, May 2009)
- Parents, grandparents, guardians, and trusted adults can make a tremendous impact in helping the children they influence avoid the dangers caused by prescription drug abuse. The majority of teens report that their parents, not their peers or the media, have the biggest impact on their decision to stay drug free (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2009)
- Prescription drug abuse is NOT the norm among teens. Far more teens do not abuse drugs than do.

## What Can You Do?

- Talk to your children about the dangers of using prescription drugs. Research indicates that kids who learn about the risks of drugs are up to 50% less likely to use drugs. (Partnership for a Drug Free America, *Partnership Tracking Attitude Study*, August 2008)
- Have family dinners. Eating dinner together 5 to 7 nights a week as opposed to 0 to 2 nights reduces the chances your children will abuse prescription drugs. (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), *The Importance of Family Dinners*, September 2009)
- Set and enforce a curfew, and monitor your teens' late night activities.
- Lead by example. Be a good role model. Don't use illegal drugs. Don't get drunk. Don't smoke.
- Don't assume your teenager or his/her friends have not, do not, or will not use prescription drugs because they are "good kids." Plenty of good kids make bad choices.
- Never give your prescription medications to anyone else, for any reason. It is illegal and potentially could cause the start of someone else's addiction.
- Treat your (and your child's) prescription medications as if they were a loaded gun. Allow no access by anyone other than yourself.
- Follow the 3 step approach recommended by Partnership for a Drug-Free America:
  - 1) Monitor**
    - Take note of how many pills are in each prescription bottle or packet.
    - Keep track of refills.
    - Lock medications or keep them in a safe place.
    - If your teen has been prescribed a drug, control the medication and monitor the dosages and refills.

## 2) Secure

- Keep all medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, in a safe place, such as a locked cabinet your teen cannot access.
- Tell relatives, especially grandparents, to lock their medications or keep them in a safe place.
- Talk to the parents of your teenager's friends. Encourage them to secure their prescriptions.

## 3) Dispose

- Inventory all prescription drugs in your home.
  - Discard expired or unused prescription drugs when your teens aren't home. Mix the medication with an undesirable substance such as used coffee grounds, kitty litter, or dirt, place in an empty can or bag and place in the trash. Most medications should not be flushed down or toilet. The few that should be flushed are listed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at this website: [http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/Ensuring-SafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#MEDICINES](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/SafeDisposalofMedicines/ucm186187.htm#MEDICINES)
  - To prevent unauthorized refills, remove any personal, identifiable information from bottles or packages before throwing them away.
  - Learn the signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse. If your teen shows symptoms of depression or is engaging in prescription drug abuse, seek professional help immediately.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of prescription drug abuse: If your teen shows symptoms of depression or is engaging in prescription drug abuse, seek professional help immediately.

## What We're Doing

- In order to educate families about the dangers of prescription drugs, the Office of the Drug Director, the Arkansas Attorney General's Office, the Department of Human Services, the Office on Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and many other committed agencies and individuals have launched a statewide youth prescription abuse prevention, education, and awareness campaign. As a component of the campaign, development of prescription drug "take-back" events is underway, along with efforts towards the ultimate goal of the establishment a permanent system of local, legal drop-off points in each county whereby citizens may dispose of unused and undesired prescriptions. Other components include:
  - Statewide broadcast and print advertising emphasizing the safe control of pharmaceutical drugs.
  - Statewide television, radio, and print news coverage.
  - Live program on AETN – "Healing Minds, Changing Attitudes."
  - Prescription drug abuse prevention information developed and delivered through partnering agencies' newsletters.

- Prescription drug abuse resource website, [www.ioit2me.com](http://www.ioit2me.com).
- Coordinated community awareness events located in Arkansas Prevention Resource Center regions.
- Coordinated community drug take-back events sponsored by local Arkansas Law Enforcement Agencies and Prevention Resource Centers.
- Development and dissemination of a community prescription drug take-back event planning toolkit to all Arkansas Law Enforcement Agencies.
- Development and dissemination of a prescription drug abuse guide for parents and educators.
- Targeted messages on prescription information sheets for commonly abused drugs distributed in Arkansas pharmacies.
- Public release of Division of Behavioral Health Services and Pride Surveys' *"Special Report on Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drug Use Among Arkansas Students."*
- Ongoing presentations by the Office of the Drug Director at community events, professional development trainings, and statewide conferences.

## **Summary**

Arkansas faces significant challenges in preventing and stopping prescription drug abuse by its young people. Parents, relatives, guardians, and trusted adults provide the first line of defense in protecting loved ones from the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Fortunately, there are many pro-active steps available to them. Parents can lay the groundwork for prevention by educating their children about alcohol, prescription, and illegal drug use. The mere expressing of disapproval of drug use is a protective factor. By following the simple steps of "monitor, secure and dispose", access to these drugs can be dramatically decreased, as most children get them directly from their relatives. With just these actions by Arkansas parents, the growing issues related to our children's abuse of pharmaceutical drugs can be reduced, reversed, and eventually eliminated!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit was developed as part of the “Monitor, Secure, and Dispose” youth prescription drug abuse prevention campaign, and was made possible through the dedication, expertise, and efforts of many individuals and agencies.

**Chief Kirk Lane** of the Benton Police Department was the primary author of this toolkit, and we appreciate him sharing this information for the benefit of all Arkansas law enforcement and communities.

**Ms. Beth Green** of the UA Criminal Justice Institute, with the support of **Dr. Cheryl May**, CJI Chief Executive Officer, graciously provided her talents in creating the layout and editing this toolkit.

The following individuals served on the committee charged with the development of the toolkit and provided major contributions:

- **SA Inez Davis, Drug Enforcement Administration**
- **Lt. Jerry Digman, Arkansas State Police**
- **SSG Shannon Nixon, Arkansas National Guard**
- **Ms. Mandy Penney, Arkansas Sheriffs Association**
- **Mr. Mark Riley, Arkansas Pharmacists Association**

These individuals provided expert technical assistance at numerous times in the development of the toolkit:

- **Ms. Kelli Cox, Drug Diversion Investigator, Walmart Stores, Inc.**
- **Mr. Allen Gilliam, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality**
- **Mr. Chuck Lange, Arkansas Sheriff’s Association**
- **Chief Montie Sims, Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police**

We would like to express heartfelt appreciation to all our campaign partner agencies including: American Legion, Arkansas Academy of Family Physicians, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Arkansas Crime Information Center, Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Human Services, Arkansas Health Care Association, Arkansas National Guard, Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association, Arkansas Pharmacists Association, Arkansas Sheriffs Association, Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy, Arkansas State Crime Laboratory, Arkansas State Police, ARKOMA Consulting, Benton Police Department, Division of Behavioral Health Services, Maloney Marketing Group, Mental Health Council of Arkansas, National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators, One Day at a Time, Out of the Dark, Inc., Office on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator, Partnership for a Drug Free America, Pope County Sheriff’s Office, Prevention Resource Centers of Arkansas, Sanofi-Aventis, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute, University of Arkansas at Little Rock MidSOUTH Institute, UAMS College of Pharmacy, United States Attorney’s Office, Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Walmart Stores, Inc.

We would like to commend Walmart's commitment to community service and their generous and ongoing donations of gift cards for use in law enforcement take-back events.

We offer very special thanks to Arkansas's top law enforcement official, **Attorney General Dustin McDaniel**, and all the members of his office, for their devotion to preventing the tragedies caused by all types of substance abuse, and for their direct support of the campaign and the toolkit.

Finally, we would like to thank all Arkansas law enforcement for their consideration of providing the crucial service afforded by take-back events to our citizens.

We apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions of contributors to this toolkit, but our appreciation to you endures.