

USA NOTES

University/Schools Alliance—Partners in Prevention www.udel.edu/usa

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Pills: the What, How and Why

While many parents may worry about their teens using illicit drugs, one of the biggest dangers today is not the use of illegal drugs, but the misuse of legal prescription drugs. One in five Delaware teens has used a prescription drug not their own in the past year. This includes diet pills, tranquilizers and barbiturates, psychoactive drugs prescribed to help students concentrate in school, and, the most abused and most dangerous of all prescription painkillers.

What are the risks?

Students do not consider the risk of using prescription medications non-medicinally as great as the use of illegal drugs. Because they were prescribed by a doctor for someone and because they are controlled by the federal Food and Drug Administration, they are thought to be safe.

What students may not consider is that 1. Drugs available illegally may not be the FDA approved drug, but may be a “look alike,” prod-

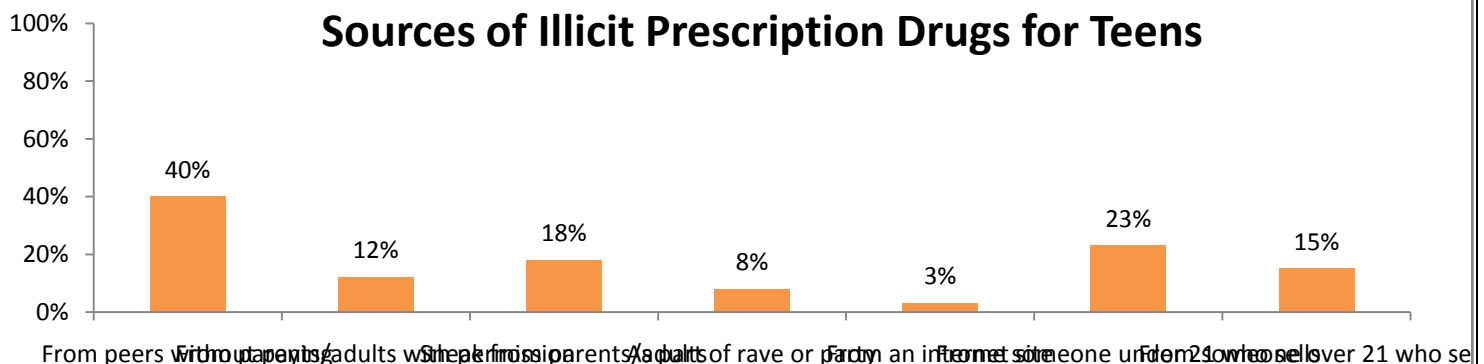
uced illegally specifically for the illegal market; 2. Teens do not have knowledge of appropriate dosage, which can vary from person to person; 3. Many of these drugs are highly addictive; and 4. Drugs may interact with other drugs the student takes by legal prescription or illegally, or with alcohol used in the same time period. This has led to large increases in admissions to treatment and Emergency Rooms, as well as increases in drug-related fatalities.

Where do they get them?

One of the reasons teens are so likely to use illicit prescription drugs is that they are so easy to get. Many teens report getting them from their friends, their parents, the family medicine cabinet, or someone else's house. Whether they are bought or shared, they are most likely gotten from someone the teen knows.



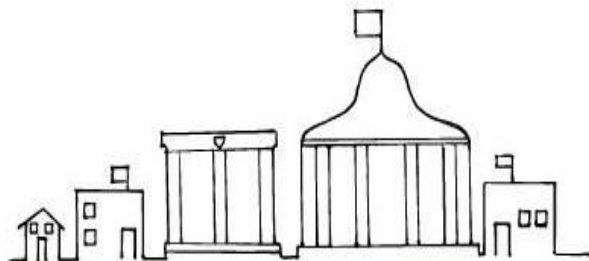
Sources of Illicit Prescription Drugs for Teens



University/Schools Alliance thanks the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA) for data analyses and other information. Information concerning substance use in Delaware for youth and adults is available at: www.udel.edu.delawaredata.

University/Schools Alliance is a coalition of New Castle County public, private and Diocese high school and the University of Delaware working together to:

- *Reduce substance use among Delaware secondary school students*
- *Create and support networks of students, parents, school and community sharing resources, strategies and support to sustain youth substance use reductions*



University of Delaware
Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies
University/Schools Alliance
77 E. Main Street
Newark, DE 19716

Roberta Gealt, Project Manager

Phone: 302-831-3204

Email: basha@udel.edu

Mary Perno, Project Coordinator

Phone: 302-831-4470

Email: mperno@udel.edu

www.udel.edu/usa

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Coalition Meetings:

December 10th at 3:30 at—Arcadia University

January 13, 2010 at 3:30 at UD Cooper. Ext. Office

Parent Chats:

Other Trainings and Events:

November 20th-- On Applebee Pond training
(students in grades 6-12 learn to provide puppet shows for students in grades K-3 with themes on smoking, decision-making and more)

December-On Applebee Pond Puppet Training

January 2010-On Applebee Pond Puppet Training

University/Schools Alliance is a federally funded Drug-Free Community (Office of National Drug Control Policy and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention). Data from the 2008 Delaware School Survey, University of Delaware, Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies