

# Provide Information

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 [preventrxabuse.org/prevention-strategies/provide-information/](http://preventrxabuse.org/prevention-strategies/provide-information/)

## STRATEGY 1 – Provide Information

*Ensure that your community understands the gravity of Rx abuse through consistent placement of this problem and its outcomes on your community's radar screen. Activities include educational presentations, school curricula, workshops or seminars, presentations, public service announcements (PSAs), brochures, billboard campaigns, community meetings, town halls, forums and Web-based communication.*

**Target everyone—teens and parents, law enforcement officers, health care professionals, educators, youth service professionals, businesses and policy makers.**

**Print out this document, and check off the strategies that are most relevant to your community.**

### GENERAL PUBLIC

**Create a broad-reaching public awareness campaign with messages that focus on**

- The number of teens and families impacted and health-related and environmental challenges resulting from abuse.
- What your coalition and its partners are doing to prevent Rx abuse.
- Where teens and families can go for treatment and recovery assistance.

**Include the following strategies in your campaign**

- Pitch your coalition's local Rx abuse prevention story to radio, television talk shows, local newspapers and social media sites. Describe how the coalition works to prevent Rx drug abuse.
- Place articles and opinion editorials into community bulletins, local newspapers and other publications (paper and virtual).
- Produce and disseminate PSAs for radio, print, TV and social media sites. Placement should include traditional media outlets, doctors' offices, clinics and websites.
- Create billboards, and gain support from the private sector to ensure placement in key areas.
- Regularly post flyers and posters in stores, libraries, places-of-worship and other locations frequented by youth and their families.
- Host community forums about prescription drug abuse.
- Invite bordering communities so you can collectively agree on youth protective strategies.
- Incorporate prescription drug abuse prevention messages and materials into community-wide events such as walk-a-thons, town hall meetings and parades.
- Become active participants on community-wide planning event committees to help ensure the insertion of Rx abuse prevention programming at events. Some national events that present local promotional opportunities include: National Drug Take-Back Day(s), ethnic-specific fairs, National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month and National Recovery Month.
- Incorporate blogs, Facebook and Twitter into your Rx abuse prevention campaigns.
- Collaborate with senior citizen organizations, pharmacists, health care professionals and other agencies to do



targeted outreach and communication.

**Include non-traditional messengers such as veterinarians, dentists, realtors and grandparents in your planning and outreach activities. They come in contact with teens and their families and may unknowingly contribute to teen Rx abuse because it's not on their radar screen. Here's how targeted messaging works**

- Veterinarians: If you prescribe pain medications, be on the alert for potential pet owner abuse of these medicines.
- Realtors: Tell your clients to lock up their medicines before opening their homes to strangers.

## **YOUTH**

**Acknowledge the important role that youth play in preventing Rx abuse. Affirm that**

- Their actions will influence the behavior of their peers.
- Teen Rx abuse is a growing problem, and they can be part of the solution.
- Medicines should only be used as directed, and under no circumstances should they be shared with others.
- Rx abuse is just as dangerous as illicit drug abuse. Overdosing on these drugs can put you in a coma, stop your heart and can kill you.
- Other effects include nausea and vomiting, dizziness, inability to concentrate, insomnia, track marks (if you're injecting), staggering or stumbling, impaired memory or judgment, uncontrollable diarrhea, unconsciousness, withdrawal symptoms, panic attacks, delusions, dependence and addiction.
- Using Rx medications without a valid prescription is illegal.
- The same refusal skills that teens use when they say "no" to alcohol and other drugs work here, too.
- It's important to know the signs and symptoms of abuse, and go to trusted adults if they know someone who needs help.
- Teens, families and communities experience Rx abuse-related health and environmental challenges that can be devastating.

### **Activities include**

- Create and post flyers, posters, banners, display boards and other visuals for dissemination in schools, recreation centers, gaming arcades, gas stations/convenience stores, movie theatres, malls and other locations frequented by youth.
- Link with national youth programs that have local affiliates such as the 4-H Club, student government organizations, the National Beta Club and Students Against Destructive Decisions. Collaborate with them to create community-specific programming.
- Involve youth in creating videos about the dangers of Rx abuse. Promote them widely through social media sites, such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram.
- Collaborate with middle through post-secondary schools and institutions to conduct poster and video competitions and campaigns. Provide rewards and recognition for all contest entrants and winners.
- Promote youth generated radio and television PSAs. Collaborate with the schools to have these messages presented during morning announcements.

## **PARENTS & ADULT CAREGIVERS**

**Acknowledge the important role that parents and adult caregivers play in preventing Rx abuse. Affirm that**

- Parents and adult caregivers need to be educated about this problem, as well as their role in preventing it.
- This population needs to understand that new users of prescription drugs have caught up with new users of marijuana, and next to marijuana, the most common illegal drugs teens are abusing are prescription medications.
- Parents must protect their children and teens from Rx abuse and addiction.
- They must
  - Watch for behavioral and physical symptoms of abuse.
  - Check for signs of Rx medications that do not belong in their teens' rooms.
  - Talk with other parents and share information.
  - Talk with their teens and grandchildren to dispel the belief that Rx drugs can be safely abused.
  - Safeguard your medications.
  - Lock up your meds.
  - Keep track of medication quantities.
  - Properly dispose of medications if they are no longer needed.
- Create and distribute flyers, bag stuffers, postcards and similar collateral through utility bills, monthly bank statements, payroll envelopes and hospital or dentist office promotional material.
- Encourage drug-free workplace programs to include Rx abuse as part of their suite of educational offerings.
- Post flyers and posters in grocery stores, businesses, libraries, places-of-worships and other locations frequented by parents.
- Incorporate training and awareness activities into community health and state fairs, senior center events and hospital open houses.

***HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS***

**Acknowledge the important role that health care professionals play in preventing Rx abuse. Affirm that**


- Doctors, nurses and pharmacists are well-positioned to influence practices around patient/customer medication use.
- These messengers can educate adults and teens about proper, Rx medicine taking, storage and disposal practices.
- They can also spot potential cases of doctor shopping and fraud.

**They can**

- Watch for signs of Rx abuse.
- Talk to their patients about drug-taking behaviors that put them at-risk. They should reiterate the importance of
  - Not sharing medications.
  - Safeguarding their medications—locking them up.
  - Keeping track of medicines and properly disposing of them when they are no longer needed.

# Modify & Change Policies

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 [preventrxabuse.org/prevention-strategies/modify-change-policies/](http://preventrxabuse.org/prevention-strategies/modify-change-policies/)

## STRATEGY 7 – Modify & Change Policies

*Support formal changes in written policies, laws and procedures aimed at preventing current and future Rx abuse. Examples include workplace initiatives, law enforcement procedures and practices, public policy actions and systems change within government, communities and organizations.*

**Target lawmakers, state and local public officials, employers and others involved in setting rules and regulations.**

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- Support the passage and utilization of
- Become engaged in educating pharmacies and health care professionals about the value of these laws and policies, and encourage them to collaborate with neighboring pharmacies and doctors' offices in and outside of your community.
- Encourage pharmaceutical companies to participate in Rx disposal efforts—in some states, the role of pharmaceuticals is written into law—and ensure the consistent presence of take-back programs so they are not just twice-a-year events.
- Create an Rx abuse law state report card that compares your state's activities with other jurisdictions. Use it to educate state and local legislators.
- Support formalized reporting policies and practices between health care professionals and law enforcement officers.
- Promote the use of drug courts, as well as appropriate sentencing for those under 21 years of age.
- Promote the use of screening and brief intervention (SBIRT) for teens and also increased access to treatment for Rx addiction.
- Engage the local zoning office to help ensure citizen oversight on how land is used in your community. This is particularly relevant with the increasing presence of "pill mills" in communities that are poor and disfranchised.
- Collaborate with the local health care associations in supporting the use of tamper-proof prescription pads.
- Organize and launch a March to the State Capitol to promote the passage of Rx abuse prevention, treatment and recovery legislation.
- Consider supporting drug testing policies and practices within school settings.
- Acknowledge the importance of Rx abuse prevention, treatment and recovery by including interventions in school and drug-free workplace and health insurance policies.
- Include policy makers in your Rx abuse prevention outreach campaign.
  - Submit personalized, hard-copy letters (not just e-mails) to politicians about the importance of prescription drug abuse prevention legislation.
  - Initiate briefings that encourage programmatic buy-in from politicians, health care professional organizations, pharmacists.
  - Coordinate youth presentations to policy boards (e.g. school board, city council, county