

## **A Reason to Say NO!**

It seems you can't pick up a paper or watch TV without a barrage of stories about heroin use and overdoses in our area. So, how did it get this bad so quickly?

Studies show that nearly half of young people who inject heroin start by abusing prescription drugs. Prescription drugs are now the most commonly-abused drugs among 12-13 year olds. Alarmingly, 1 in 4 teenagers report having abused or misused an Rx drug at least once in their lifetime. And unfortunately parents are often unaware of the problem. 95% believe their child has never taken a prescription drug for a reason other than its intended use.

So where are kids getting these prescription drugs? Well, two-thirds of teens who abuse Rx pain relievers say that they got them from family or friends.

### **How can parents protect their kids from prescription drug abuse?**

A new pilot project called Give Me A Reason provides parents with tips and tools for talking with their children about drug abuse in an open, honest, and non-judgmental way. These conversations are crucial since kids whose parents talk with them about drug abuse are 50% less likely to abuse drugs.

Give Me A Reason also provides parents with a free non-invasive drug test that can be given within the privacy of home with results in approximately 10 minutes. It tests for 10 commonly abused drugs. While some parents may be tempted to run home and test their children for drugs, the program intends for the kits to be used as a preventative measure. *"Having a drug test at home, even sitting on top of your refrigerator, gives your child a reason to tell their peers no I can't do that because my parents can drug test me"*, says Kristi Justice, Executive Director of the Kanawha Communities That Care substance abuse prevention partnership. Justice compares it to having a fire-extinguisher at home, *"You don't expect to have to use it, but it's good to have one at home just in case."*

Kanawha County parents can learn more about Give Me A Reason and get their free resource kit at any of following distribution sites:

#### **Kanawha County School Clinics**

- The Nurse at Each Middle and High Schools in Kanawha County

#### **Kanawha – Charleston Health Department**

- 108 Lee Street E., Charleston, WV 25301, (304)344-5243, Attn: Tina Ramirez

#### **Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church**

- 305 E Street, South Charleston, WV 25303, (304) 744-5523

#### **Kanawha County Sheriff's Office**

- Lt. Bob Lilly, 304-357-0729

#### **Partnership for African American Churches**

- Rev. James Patterson, 304-768-7688

#### **Oakwood Baptist Church**

- 855 Oakwood Road, Charleston, 25314, (304) 344-2134

#### **Hansford Senior Center**

- 500 Washington Street, St. Albans, WV 25177, (304) 722-4621

#### **Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority**

- Mike Jarrett, 304-345-2312 Ext. 123

For more information contact Kanawha Communities That Care at (304) 437-3356 or [www.kanawhactc.org](http://www.kanawhactc.org)