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coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

Chief Blakey's Rx for Prescription Drug Abuse: Vigilance

Tiverton does not have an "epidemic" problem with illegal prescription drugs now, but attitudes, the town's location and even new laws in Florida that govern so-called prescription drug mills put Tiverton at risk, according to Police Chief Thomas Blakey.



Chief Thomas Blakey

"(Arrest for illegal sale or possession) ebbs and flows," Chief Blakey said, "but it's something we keep a close eye on. We know kids are experimenting (with prescription drugs) and we don't want them to have them."

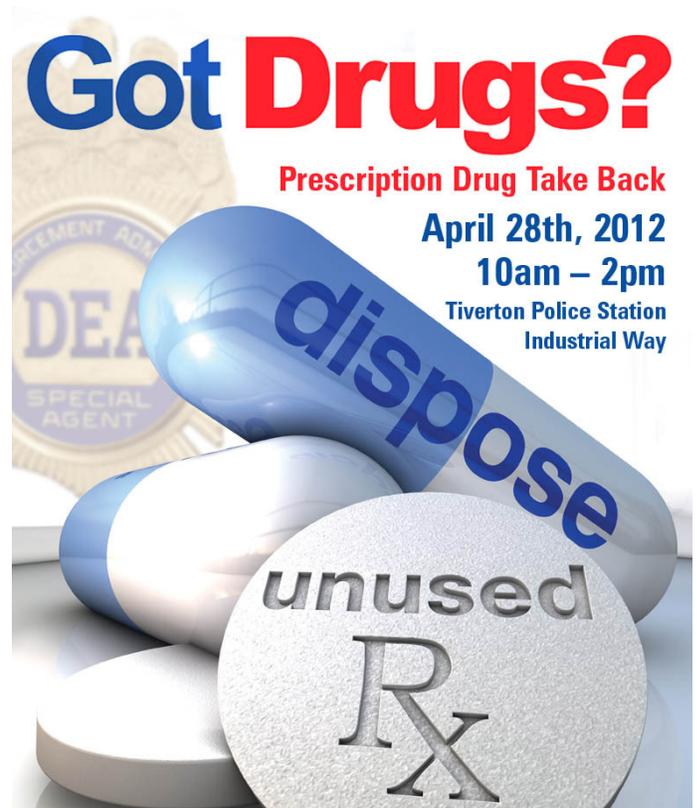
The Coalition's 2012 annual survey of Tiverton High School students reports that youth are experimenting with Rx medicine. While 88% of THS students said they did not use pills and illicit drugs in the past 30 days; 12% did and, overall, 25% of THS students indicated that it would be "sort of" or "very" easy to get illicit drugs. Notably, 32% of 9th grade females, versus only 19% of grade 9 males, indicated it would be easy or very easy to obtain illicit drugs.

Chief Blakey pointed out that one of the risk factors associated with Rx abuse is that it has become "more socially acceptable." Studies confirm this trend, pointing out that teens tend to think that because these drugs are medically safe, they're also safe for illicit recreational use, which is a false assumption that is often "reinforced by the entertainment media," Chief Blakey added.

Tiverton's proximity to Fall River is also a risk factor for illegal drug use. Fall River based street gangs whose income relies on drug sales "don't recognize state lines," Chief Blakey said "and Tiverton is also on the "drug route" to Newport.

Compounding local law enforcement efforts is a change in Florida law that limits the amount of drugs but not the number of prescriptions a local drug dealer can get from Florida "drug mills," aka, pain medicine clinics, where disreputable physicians make huge salaries for freely dispensing drugs and writing prescriptions. "It's easier to catch some with a bag full of pills," Chief Blakey said, "but when they just come back with 'paper,' it doesn't make our job easier.

"We need people to trust their senses," the Chief advised. "If you see something suspicious, take action. Call us. And, don't leave prescription drugs around," he added. "Remove the temptation to experimentation."



Next Issue: Profile of Officer Aaron Kay, Certified Drug Recognition Expert.



REBECCA'S notes

Teens abuse prescription drugs because they believe the myth that these drugs are safer than illicit street drugs like heroin and cocaine. Teens believe that if a substance is "medicine" it is safe. However, when misused or taken without a doctor's prescription these drugs can be just as harmful as street drugs. When taken with alcohol, as many young people do, their use can have serious and possibly deadly consequences.

Prescription drugs are fairly accessible to teenagers, who most often find these drugs in their own homes. Accessibility, along with the common misconception that prescription drugs are a "safe high," make adolescent prescription drug abuse an increasingly significant problem that demands the attention of educators, parents, law enforcement officials, policy makers, health professionals, and prevention specialists.

Know what's in your medicine cabinet and properly discard expired or unused prescription medications.

Around the Country

Turn 'em in. Americans participating in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA's) third National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on October 29, 2011 turned in more than 188 tons of unwanted or expired medications and removed them from circulation on the streets.

The DEA, the Tiverton Police Department and the Tiverton Prevention Coalition will sponsor another prescription drug "Take-Back" initiative on Saturday, April 28, 2012 from 10am to 2pm at the Tiverton Police Station on Industrial Way in an effort to prevent increased pill abuse and theft. Drop boxes will be placed in the lobby. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked.

Please Forward!!

Please help The Coalition keep the community informed about preventing and reducing underage drinking and substance abuse in Tiverton. Forward this newsletter to friends and family. *Thanks!*



Practicing Prevention **5 Good Reasons to Have Family Dinners**



When families gather together around a dinner table they do a lot more than eat. They prevent alcohol and substance abuse, improve academic performance and reduce the risk of marijuana use, according to [The Importance of Family Dinners IV](#), published by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

Take a look at some of the findings...and then set the table for healthier kids.

Compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners per week, those who have fewer than three family dinners per week are: 1) more than twice as likely to say they expect to try drugs in the future; 2) more likely to have friends who abuse prescription drugs (to get high); 3) more than one and a half times likelier to have friends who drink regularly and use marijuana; 4) twice as likely to have used tobacco, nearly twice as likely to have used alcohol, and one and a half times likelier to have used marijuana; and 5) nearly twice as likely to report receiving mostly C's or lower grades in school. Teens who report typically receiving mostly C's or lower grades in school are likelier to smoke, drink and use drugs compared to teens who typically receive all A's or A's and B's in school.

Contact the Coalition

Phone: 401.835.5311

Email: Rebecca@tivertonprevention.org

www.tivertonprevention.org

