



The conversation starts here.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

August 7, 2007

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***19<sup>th</sup> Annual National Study Finds Significant Decrease in Parent/Teen Discussions About Drugs and Alcohol***

***- As Teens Continue Intentionally Abusing Medicines to Get High, More Parents Are Aware of the Threat, But Are Not Taking Action -***

***Partnership Launches "Time To Talk" to Encourage Parent/Teen Conversations***

**New York, N.Y., August 7, 2007** – At a time when teens are faced with new threats from the intentional abuse of medicines, the number of frequent discussions between parents and teens about the risks of drug abuse has decreased significantly, according to a national study released today by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America®.

The Partnership's 19th annual Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) represents a deep analysis into parental attitudes and behaviors towards teen drug use. It is the only ongoing national research study that delves into what parents are thinking and how they respond to the continual changes in the drug landscape. Since 1993, GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media has conducted the PATS study for the Partnership.

**[Data on Parents Talking to Kids About Drugs and Alcohol](#)**

This 2006 PATS survey on parents confirms a 12 percent decline from 2005 in the frequent discussions (four or more) between parents and their teens about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse (55 percent in 2005 down to 49 percent in 2006).

Only half of parents, 54 percent, reported thoroughly discussing the use of drugs like heroin, cocaine and crack with their kids. Even more concerning is that a mere 36 percent of parents reported having in-depth conversations about abuse of prescription medications and only 33 percent have thoroughly discussed abuse of OTC cough and cold medicines with their teens.

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More alarming is the misperception among many parents that the abuse of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medications is safer than the use of illegal drugs.

In the Partnership's teen study<sup>1</sup>, teens reported using prescription stimulants, like Adderall and/or Ritalin and prescription pain relievers, like Vicodin, OxyContin, and/or Tylox without a doctor's prescription. They also reported using over-the-counter cough and cold medicines, including cough syrup to intentionally get high.

"Right now in the U.S., there are 32 million<sup>2</sup> families with children at risk of abusing drugs and alcohol," said Steve Pasierb, president and CEO of the Partnership. "The results from this year's survey reveal a critical need to better support, educate, empower and truly help parents feel more prepared and comfortable discussing the current drug issues this generation of kids is facing. The need has never been greater, nor has this issue been more relevant, as last year's results showed 1 in 5 teens abused prescription medicine to get high and 1 in 10 abused cough and cold medicines containing the active ingredient dextromethorphan, or DXM. The most recent PATS findings show many parents wrongly perceive the abuse of these drugs to somehow be safer than the use of illegal street drugs. Parents need the facts, to understand how things have changed, and the dangers of intentional Rx/OTC drug abuse must be at the forefront of the discussions with their kids."

Released today in New York, the 2006 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study surveyed 1,356 parents, with a deeper analysis of parents of teens, grades 7-12 (margin of error: +/-3.9 percent). Top-line findings from this nationally projectable tracking study show parents feel they need more help talking with their kids about living healthy and drug-free lives and understanding constantly shifting drug trends.

While a vast majority of parents are aware of new drug threats like teens' abuse of medicines, parents are not thoroughly covering the very real health risks of medicine abuse with their kids. On average, parents are a third less likely to discuss the risks of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse than they are to discuss the risks of drugs like heroin, cocaine, and crack with their teens.

"Our teen data tell us that nearly one in five kids, or 4.5 million teens, has abused an Rx medication without a doctor's prescription to either get high or because they believe these medications might help mitigate stress or depression," said Pasierb. "Educating parents about the signs of abuse and how to best start the conversation with their kids about the risks associated with abusing prescription and over-the-counter medicines is a necessity."

According to the data released today, nearly one-third of parents say they have a need for more information about drugs; 30 percent say they need tips on how to start a discussion about drugs; 37 percent reported they want information on how to tell if a child is using drugs. A growing number of parents don't just want information; they want advice on what to do and best approaches to having open and honest dialogues with their kids.

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<sup>1</sup> PATS 2005 Teen Survey

<sup>2</sup> US Census 2000, Parents with children ages 8 - 17

“The lives of today’s teens are busier than ever before and parents and caregivers have to serve as ‘air traffic’ controllers, helping to manage all information and activities that are a part of their kids’ routines,” said Dr. Amelia Arria, a senior scientist at the Treatment Research Institute and a nationally recognized researcher on the identification of risk and protective factors for adolescent and young adult drug involvement. “Parent involvement is a critical part of reducing a child’s risk for substance abuse.”

### **Partnership Launches Time to Talk™ Campaign and TimeToTalk.org Parent Web Site**

In response to the PATS data, the Partnership is today launching a new year-round national movement called **Time to Talk** (TimeToTalk.org). The initiative is a first-of-its kind effort for the Partnership and is designed to encourage and empower parents to have ongoing discussions with their kids about the risks of drug and alcohol abuse.

“Research continues to show that kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to use drugs, yet only 31 percent of kids report learning about the risks of drugs from their parents,” said Debbie Kellogg, director corporate relations and alliances. “Teens report that foremost among the reasons they don’t use drugs is because they don’t want to disappoint their parents. We want to help parents better understand that they are a huge influence on the choices kids make for themselves. **Time to Talk** is designed to help empower parents, by helping remove fear and apprehension parents feel, turning what parents think needs to be an overwhelming single ‘drug talk’ into a simpler ongoing dialogue with their child during their middle school and teen years. “

**TimeToTalk.org**, offers parents manageable resources to help them feel empowered to speak with their kids about living healthy lives and to motivate constant communication among family members. The new web resource not only helps parents start the conversation, but encourages them to sustain it over time by providing easy-to-use tools, tips, information and support to help parents feel much more at ease. Parents will be able to sign up for free monthly newsletters and get exclusive access to great tools such as, Tips for Getting the Conversation Started, How to Help Your Kid Turn Down Drugs and answering the question: “Did You Do Drugs?” Insightful, timely and relevant content and resources will be updated and added frequently.

A multi-media public-service campaign to raise awareness about **Time to Talk.org** began running nationally in August. New-York-based advertising agency Wunderman, created television, print and digital advertising for the **Time to Talk** campaign and MacGuffin Films directed the television spots. All creative work for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America is produced *pro bono* with both Wunderman and MacGuffin donating their creative talents and staff time to this new campaign.

For more information about the 2006 PATS parents study, visit [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org). To learn more about **Time to Talk**, visit **TimeToTalk.org**.

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*The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a nonprofit organization uniting communications professionals, renowned scientists and parents. Best known for its national drug-education campaign, the Partnership’s mission is to reduce illicit drug use in America. Now in its 20th year, the Partnership helps parents and caregivers effectively address drug and alcohol abuse with their children. A major new initiative now unfolding integrates the latest science and research with the most effective traditional media and digital communication techniques to give parents the tools, resources and support they need to help their children lead healthy lives. This effort – the first ever for the Partnership – will include a web-based interactive information resource center, parent-to-parent support network, a national toll-free call center and user-friendly online/offline tools. The Partnership depends on donations and support from individuals, corporations, foundations and government. The Partnership thanks SAG/AFTRA for their ongoing generosity.*