



ARKANSAS EPIDEMIOLOGICAL WORKGROUP PERFORMANCE PROFILE

PreventionWorksAR.org

A high priority: *Preventing prescription drug abuse in Arkansas*

Every day, 2,000 teenagers use a prescription drug to get high for the first time, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. They're getting these drugs at home, as easily as opening a cupboard, drawer or medicine cabinet. This problem is just as real here in Arkansas.

- In 2007, Arkansas was reported to have the worst teen prescription pain reliever abuse problem in the entire United States (SAMHSA, cited in ONDCP's *Teens and Prescription Drugs*, Feb. 2007)
- Arkansas is in the top 20 percent for nonmedical prescription drug abuse for people ages 12-17 and ages 18-25 (NSDUH 2010-2011)
- The second most abused drugs (excluding alcohol and tobacco) among 10th and 12th grade students were prescription drugs (APNA, 2013)
- From 2007-2011, 19 Arkansas youth ages 12-17 died of prescription drug or over-the-counter drug poisoning (CDC, WONDER data)
- In 2010, the rate of prescription drug overdose deaths in Arkansas was above the national rate (12.5 vs. 12.4 per 100,000 population, CDC, PSR 2013)

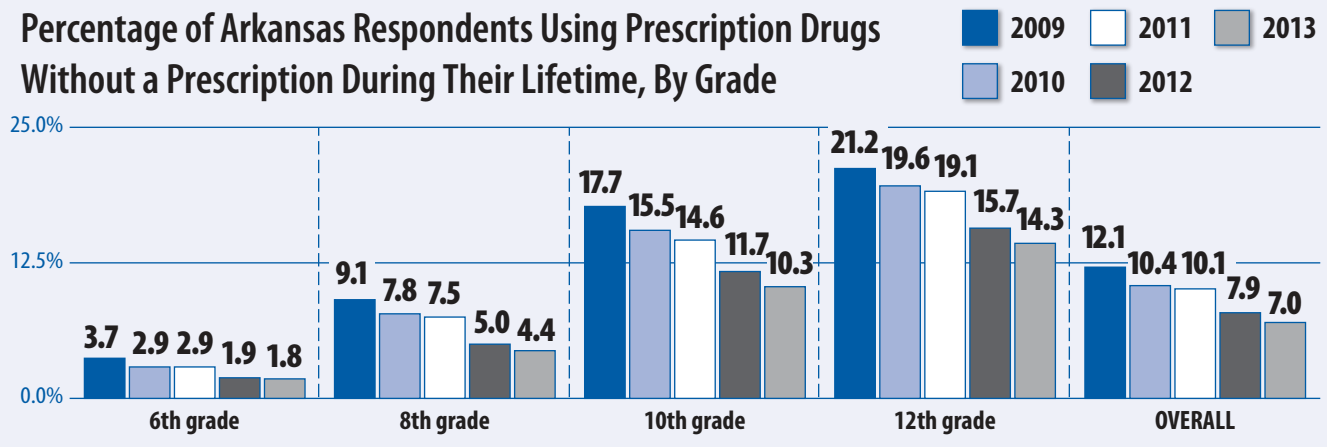
The percentage of Arkansas students who have abused prescription drugs has declined over the past five years (Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Student Survey, 2013). But our state has much work to do in preventing prescription drug abuse. Fourteen percent of Arkansas students abuse drugs by their senior year (APNA 2013). *(See back page.)*

The good news: There are steps you can take to help protect your kids from prescription drug abuse: **Monitor**, **Secure** and **Dispose**. These steps are provided by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America as a service to all Arkansas parents.



2015

Percentage of Arkansas Respondents Using Prescription Drugs Without a Prescription During Their Lifetime, By Grade



Parents can immediately help reduce teen access to prescription drugs, because these drugs are found in the home. But how aware are you? Think about this: Would you know if some of your pills were missing? Make sure you can honestly answer, "Yes." Be open with teenagers on the dangers of taking other people's prescription medications.

Teens abuse prescription drugs because they can get to them easily without paying for them. In fact, according to NSDUH (2011), approximately 71 percent of individuals who have abused prescription pain relievers were given them, bought them, or stole them from friends or family, and more than half received them for free. Usually the friend or family member doesn't even know. Protect your prescriptions the same way you would protect jewelry or cash.

Safely disposing of expired or unused prescription medications is vital to help protect your teens. Here are ways to help lower the risk of your teens or their friends abusing your medications:

- When your teens are not at home, go through your medications and throw away expired or unused prescription drugs.
- The best way to dispose of your medications is through take-back events and prescription return drop boxes sponsored by local law enforcement agencies.
- Teenagers will get prescription drugs from the trash. If take-back events or drop boxes are not available, mix the medication with a substance such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter. Put the mixture into an empty can or bag, and throw it away.
- Do not flush medicine down the drain or toilet.
- Remove any personal information from prescription bottles or pill packages before you throw them away. This will prevent refills and protect your family's privacy.



DATA SOURCES:

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) data, 2010-2011 • "Prescription for Danger" 2008 report of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Partnership for a Drug-Free America • 2009-2013 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) • U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prevention Status Reports (PSR) 2013: Prescription Drug Overdose-Arkansas

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