



"I remember the first day I took drugs, and they were actually from my mother's medicine cabinet, and I took that drug and I went to school and it was like nirvana. . . . I felt good about myself. The world changed." —*Lyn Legere*

INFORMATION SHEET

BACKGROUND: **In an effort to prevent abuse of prescription medications and protect the environment**, the Partnership for a Drug-Free Spring Branch, in collaboration with the Harris County Constable's Office, is spearheading a campaign called "Operation Medicine Cabinet™".ⁱ We are developing partnerships with local retailers, law enforcement, and other community sectors to:

- Educate the community about safe storage and disposal of prescription and over-the-counter medications;
- Hold local medication take-back events; and
- Establish permanent drop-off sites to encourage residents to bring unused and expired medicines for proper disposal.

WHO: The Coalition of Behavioral Health Services through its Partnership for a Drug-Free Spring Branch, in collaboration with the Harris County Constable's Office and H-E-B grocery markets

WHERE: **H-E-B Bunker Hill Market**
9710 Katy Freeway
Houston, Texas 77055

WHEN: **Saturday, August 14, 2010** — 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 13, 2010 — 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

WHAT: Local community residents are invited to bring their unused and expired prescription and over-the-counter medications to the Operation Medicine Cabinet booth. Law enforcement officers from the Harris County Constable's Office will be on hand to ensure safe, secure, and proper handling and disposal of discarded pharmaceuticals.

WHY: **One in five teens in grades 9-12 (3.2 million teens) report they have abused a prescription medication** at least once in their lives.ⁱⁱ Teenagers, known as Generation Rx, achieve an easy high from these prescription medications.

In 2008, Texas teens acknowledged that it is **easier to obtain prescription drugs than beer**ⁱⁱⁱ and that the source of those drugs is typically their family medicine cabinet. Over-the-counter medications are also a significant problem for this population.^{iv}

Forty-one percent (41%) of **teens think it is safer to misuse a prescription drug** than it is to use illegal drugs.^v

Among youth, emergency department visits for **medication poisonings** (excluding abuse and recreational drug use) are twice as common as poisonings from other household products (such as cleaning solutions and personal care products).^{vi}

Prescription drugs that are abused or used for non-medical reasons can alter brain activity, lead to dependence, can mask or cause misdiagnoses of a serious illness, can cause life-threatening injuries (driving under the influence), and can also cause coma or death.

Failure to secure and/or dispose of expired or unused prescription drugs may result in their falling in the wrong hands. Flushing or throwing medications in the trash is improper and is harmful to humans and pets and can cause contamination to the Gulf Coast aquatic environment.

ABOUT US:

The Drugs Kill Campaign, Inc. d/b/a Coalition of Behavioral Health Services is a Texas 501(c)(3) corporation originally founded to prevent substance abuse among youth and to increase community awareness and activism about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs to our young people.

The Coalition has been in existence for close to 20 years and is now a broad-based community coalition that works to prevent and reduce the problem and effect of substance abuse and related mental and physical health disorders in communities within Houston and Harris County, Texas. The mission of the “Partnership for a Drug-Free Spring Branch” (an Office of National Drug Policy-funded grant managed by the Coalition) is to mobilize and support the Spring Branch community’s capacity to influence attitudes, policies, and practices in ways that prevent and reduce substance abuse among the youth of the community.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free Spring Branch is a community coalition made up of organizations and individuals who have an investment in Spring Branch, and who want to make the community a better place to live, work, and play for everyone. We welcome you to join us in this important work!

CONTACT:

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We are proud to partner with Harris County Constable Pct. 5, Harris County Constable Pct. 1, and H-E-B Bunker Hill Market for our May 15, 2010 take-back

www.cbhshouston.org

ⁱ Operation Medicine Cabinet is a pending Federal Trademark application owned by the Substance Abuse Coalition of Collier County, Inc. d/b/a Drug Free Collier, a Florida not-for-profit corporation.

ⁱⁱ Partnership for a Drug-Free America, *2009 Parents and Teens Attitude Tracking Study Report* (February 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XIII (2008).

^{iv} Texas Drug Demand Reduction Advisory Committee, *Report to State Leadership* (January 2009).

^v Partnership for a Drug-Free America, *2009 Parents and Teens Attitude Tracking Study Report* (February 2010).

^{vi} Schillie SF, Shehab, N, Thomas, KE, Budnitz DS (2009). Medication overdoses leading to emergency department visits among children, *Am J Prev Med*, 37:181-187.