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## Office of National Drug Control Policy

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### Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan

The complete plan, entitled *Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis*, can be found online at:  
<http://www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov/prescriptiondrugs/>

*ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.*



**ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske announces the release of the Administration's new plan, entitled *Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis*, on April 19 in Washington, D.C.**

The Office of National Drug Control Policy, along with Federal agency partners, has announced the release of a sweeping new plan to reduce the abuse of prescription drugs, the fastest-growing drug problem in the United States.

*Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis*, released April 19 in Washington, D.C., expands upon the Administration's *National Drug Control Strategy* and outlines action in four major areas:

- ❖ **Education.** A crucial first step in tackling the problem of prescription drug abuse is to educate parents, youth, and patients about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. It also calls for mandatory prescriber education regarding the safe and appropriate use of opioid painkillers.
- ❖ **Monitoring.** Implement prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) in every state, and enhance PDMPs to make sure they share data across states and are used by healthcare providers.
- ❖ **Proper Medication Disposal.** Develop convenient and environmentally responsible prescription drug disposal programs

to help reduce prescription drug diversion.

- ❖ **Enforcement.** Provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to eliminate improper prescribing practices and reduce "pill mills" and "doctor shopping."

Prescription drug abuse is categorized as a public health epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In recent years, the number of individuals who, for the first time, consumed prescription drugs for a non-medical purpose was similar to the number of first-time marijuana users.

The 2010 Monitoring the Future study, a national survey on youth drug use, found that six of the top ten substances used by 12<sup>th</sup> graders were pharmaceuticals.

Joining Director Kerlikowske for the announcement were Michele Leonhart, DEA Administrator; Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services; Dr. Margaret A. Hamburg, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration; and Karen H. Perry, Executive Director of the NOPE Task Force.

# United Nations Narcotics Commission Endorses U.S. Resolution on Drugged Driving

A United States resolution encouraging all nations to join in the effort to curb drugged driving won enthusiastic approval at last month's conference of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria.

The meeting, convened each year by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is the most widely attended international gathering on issues pertaining to substance abuse. It provides the United States a unique opportunity to put forward the Nation's priorities and interact with a large number of international partners.

The U.S. delegation was led by ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske and William Brownfield, the State Department's newly appointed Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. It included ONDCP staff as well as officials from the Departments of State, Justice, and Health and Human Services.

Headlining the United States' agenda were efforts to highlight the issue of drugged driving among the international community. During the plenary debate, Director Kerlikowske briefed nations on the

current state of affairs and research currently underway in the United States. He also led a broad range of nations in a discussion of ways to improve international coordination of scientific, legal, and educational efforts aimed at reducing drugged driving.

The drugged driving resolution introduced by the United States encouraged greater prevention, education, and enforcement efforts among member nations, and called for countries to participate in a policy and research symposium on drugged driving to be held in Canada in July. During the meeting, the United States also co-sponsored resolutions on enhancing precursor chemical control and preventing prescription drug abuse.

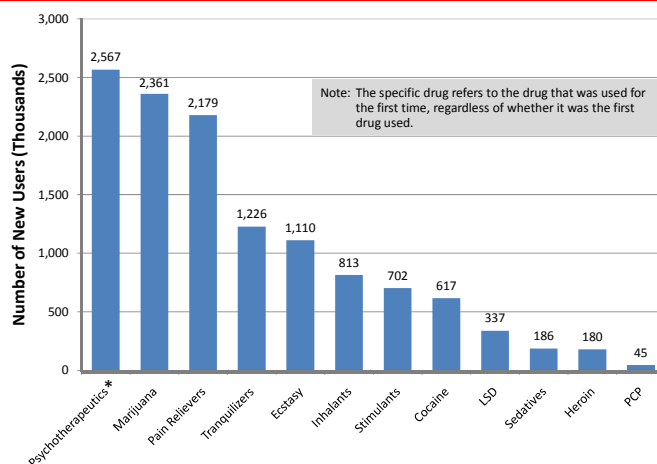
Other activities included a well-attended discussion group organized by the United States on criminal justice programs designed to break the cycle of drug use and incarceration. Director Kerlikowske and Dr. Angela Hawken, a leading researcher on the issue at Pepperdine University, were featured speakers. Director Kerlikowske briefed the

international audience on a number of successful U.S. programs, including drug courts, drug market initiatives, and reentry efforts.

Dr. Hawken reported on her evaluation of Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE) program, which has successfully employed a mix of random drug testing and modest sanctions for violations – such as a weekend in prison – to sharply reduce drug use. HOPE participants who cannot reduce their drug use with testing and sanctions are provided drug treatment. More than 75 percent of HOPE probationers in Hawaii stop using drugs almost immediately after beginning the program, thus reserving treatment resources for the 25 percent who require it.

During the conference, held March 21-25, Director Kerlikowske and Assistant Secretary Brownfield conducted bilateral meetings with drug policy officials from multiple international delegations to the CND, members of UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board, and various non-governmental organizations.

**New Users in the Past Year of Specific Illicit Drugs  
Among Persons Aged 12 or Older, 2009**



\*Includes pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives

Source: SAMHSA, 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (September 2010).

## Number of Those Abusing Prescription Drugs for the First Time in the Past Year Similar to the Number of New Marijuana Users

According to the 2009 *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, the number of people who started abusing psychotherapeutics (including prescription opioid pain relievers, tranquilizers, sedatives, and stimulants) in the 12 months prior to taking the survey was about the same as the number of first-time marijuana users.

## *In Moscow, U.S. and Russia Commit to Increased Cooperation In Anti-Drug Effort*

On March 24th, Director Kerlikowske and Victor Ivanov, Director of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service (FSKN), co-chaired the fourth meeting of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission Counternarcotics Working Group in Moscow.

During the Working Group meeting, Directors Kerlikowske and Ivanov discussed progress on the state of U.S.-Russian counternarcotics cooperation, signed a joint report detailing the activities of the Working Group, and engaged in an in-depth discussion of youth prevention efforts. High-level counterdrug representatives from both governments participated, as did drug prevention, recovery, and treatment experts, as well as specialists in drug enforcement and financial crime.

"Our joint efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences mark an era of unprecedented counterdrug cooperation and engagement with Russia," said Director Kerlikowske. "As the report we signed today details, both of our countries are committed to supporting comprehensive and balanced initiatives that reduce the impact our shared drug problem inflicts on both of our societies."

The United States and Russia have taken significant action to improve bilateral counternarcotics cooperation since President Obama and President Medvedev formed the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission in July 2009. Since that time, U.S. and Russian law enforcement authorities have engaged in numerous joint training activities and cooperated on two major joint enforcement operations.

The two governments also engaged in extensive exchanges on initiatives to reduce the demand for drugs, including visits by Russian authorities to prevention,



***“Our joint efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences mark an era of unprecedented counterdrug cooperation and engagement with Russia.”***

– Director Kerlikowske

treatment, and recovery agencies and programs in Los Angeles, Baltimore, and the Washington, D.C., area.

At the March meeting, the Working Group agreed to continue these efforts in 2011, further enhancing cooperation on drug law enforcement investigations and countering illicit financial flows, with an emphasis on the illicit drug trade emanating from Afghanistan. The group also agreed to focus greater attention on demand reduction efforts in support of Russia’s State Anti-Narcotics Strategy and the U.S. *National Drug Control Strategy*.

Under the leadership of President Obama and President Medvedev, and coordinated by Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister Lavrov, the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission is dedicated to identifying areas of cooperation and joint projects that strengthen strategic stability, international security, and the development of ties between the Russian and American people.

**Meeting in Moscow on March 24, Director Kerlikowske, right, and Victor Ivanov, Director of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, discussed the progress of counternarcotics cooperation between the two countries.**





# 'Legal' Doesn't Mean 'Safe,' Says Director, Highlighting Threat of Inhalant Abuse

Director Kerlikowske joined other public health officials last month at a press conference in Washington, D.C., to highlight the dangers of inhalant abuse and kick off the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week, which began March 20.

"Just because a product is legal doesn't mean it is safe," said Director Kerlikowske, referring to the practice of "huffing," or inhaling chemical vapors for the mind-altering effects. "Our homes are increasingly becoming the source of dangerous drugs of abuse for young people." Whether these products are inhalants found under our sinks and in our utility rooms, or dangerous prescription drugs stored in our medicine cabinets, parents need to act today to protect our young people by securing these products and discussing the harms they cause."

Chronic use of inhalants can cause irreversible damage to the brain, kidneys, and lungs, as well as death. Although huffing is often thought to be a life-threatening activity primarily among children and adolescents, a new government study shows adults represent the majority of inhalant treatment admissions.

The study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found that 54 percent of the 3,273 treatment admissions related to inhalant abuse in 2008 involved adults age 18 or older. According to the study, 52 percent of these adult admissions involved people age 18 to 29; 32 percent involved people age 30 to 44; and 16 percent involved people age 45 or older (figure 1). Most (72 percent) were male, more than one third had less than a high school education (38 percent), and almost three quarters (72 percent) were non-Hispanic White (figure 2).

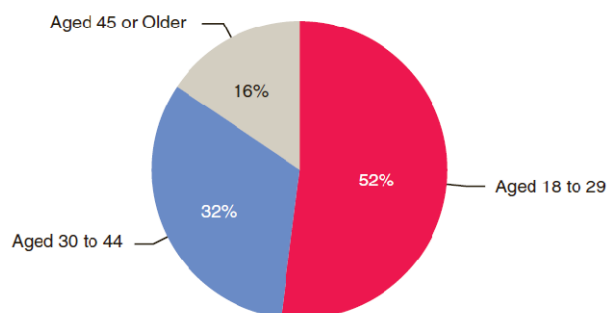
The findings were announced by SAMHSA in collaboration with the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (NIPC).

The SAMHSA Spotlight Study, *Adults Represent Majority of Inhalant Treatment Admissions*, is based on data from SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set, a reporting system involving treatment facilities around the country.

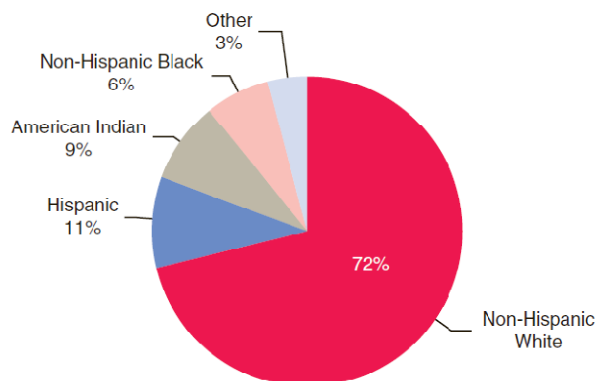
More information is available online:

- ❖ SAMHSA's Spotlight Study: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/spotlight/Spotlight024InhalantAdmissions.pdf>
- ❖ ONDCP inhalant material: [www.TheAntiDrug.com](http://www.TheAntiDrug.com)
- ❖ NIPC information: [www.inhalants.org](http://www.inhalants.org)
- ❖ National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) findings on inhalants: [www.inhalants.drugabuse.gov](http://www.inhalants.drugabuse.gov)

**Figure 1. Treatment Admissions Involving Inhalants among Adults Aged 18 or Older, by Age Group: 2008**



**Figure 2. Treatment Admissions Involving Inhalants among Adults Aged 18 or Older, by Race/Ethnicity: 2008**



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: *Adults Represent Majority of Inhalant Treatment Admissions*, Data Spotlight, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), SAMHSA, March 17, 2011.