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Office of National Drug Control Policy

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

More Than Ever, We Need To Focus On Preventing Drug Use

By David K. Mineta

As the recently confirmed Deputy Director of Demand Reduction for the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), I am honored by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children, families, and communities across the Nation.

For nearly 15 years, I saw the impact of drugs at the community level while working with Asian American Recovery Services throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. As a trustee for ten years with the Jefferson Union High School District in Daly City, California, I saw how schools contribute to reducing drug use and its consequences among youth.

Stopping drug use before it begins is a cost-effective, common-sense approach to promoting safe and healthy communities. With this in mind, prevention was made a foundational pillar of the Administration's 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy* and one of ONDCP's signature initiatives.

The science of prevention has developed in significant ways over the past decade and now provides five critical lessons:

1. Youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use are strongly influenced by adult use of these substances.
2. Research on the adolescent brain shows there is an at-risk period for the development of substance use disorders. People who do not use drugs by the age of 21 are unlikely ever to develop a substance use problem.
3. Many risk factors for substance use in youth predict a range of other



David K. Mineta, Deputy Director of Demand Reduction

problems, including bullying, social rejection, school failure, depression, and teenage pregnancy. Other risk factors for substance abuse – including access to drugs, price, perceptions of harm, and social disapproval – need to be taken into account when delivering prevention.

4. Robust, research-derived approaches are available to protect America's youth from the short- and long-term damage of substance use.
5. Prevention approaches that reach young people in a range of settings (schools, family, worksites, faith communities, athletic organizations, and others) have a stronger impact than those limited to one setting.

Taken together, these findings indicate that an effective approach to prevention must rely on evidence-based practices,

Federal Perspectives on Preventing Substance Abuse



Pamela S. Hyde



Kevin Jennings



Laurie Robinson

ONDCP Update recently conducted interviews with leaders from three Federal agencies to learn about their agencies' respective roles, initiatives, and collaborative opportunities related to substance abuse prevention. Participating in the discussion were **Pamela S. Hyde, JD**, Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services; **Laurie Robinson**, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Department of Justice; and **Kevin Jennings**, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Department of Education.

Here's what they had to say ...

How would you characterize drug abuse prevention as it relates to your agency's overall mission?

Ms. Hyde: Prevention is the process of creating environmental conditions and individual attributes that support the well-being of people and communities. Substance abuse prevention and the prevention of mental, emotional, and behavioral health problems and disorders is the top priority and the first of our eight strategic initiatives.

Ms. Robinson: Because most of the responsibility for crime control and prevention falls to

law enforcement officers in states, cities, and neighborhoods, OJP strives to be effective in these areas through partnerships with these officers, grant funding, and the availability of national training and technical assistance. We also adhere to a collaborative approach and work to bring all of our criminal justice partners – law enforcement, prosecution, public defenders, courts, corrections, judges, victims, researchers, and others – to the table when addressing crime and prevention issues, including substance abuse.

Mr. Jennings: President Obama has set an ambitious goal as a part of his American Graduation

Initiative that, by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. We know that high-risk drinking and drug use by students contribute to numerous academic, social, and health-related problems – and this must be addressed if we are to achieve the President's goal.

What are two or three major initiatives underway by your agency that contribute to reducing drug use by youth?

Ms. Robinson: The Juvenile and Family Drug Court

programs, the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program, and numerous mentoring initiatives serve to keep young people in school and help decrease the likelihood they will experience negative outcomes such as substance abuse or involvement in delinquent acts. In addition, we have partnered with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America to launch PACT 360 – Police and Communities Together. PACT 360 is a law enforcement-led community prevention education system designed to help parents and other concerned adults reduce youth drug and alcohol use and its accompanying criminal behavior, thereby improving safety and quality of life while reducing the strain on law enforcement and other community resources.

Mr. Jennings: The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools currently provides funding and other resources to educators, community-based organizations, and other agencies to promote effective programs and strategies designed to address youth substance abuse and promote healthy schools and students. The Obama Administration’s blueprint for revising the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) includes a call for a \$410 million Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program, under which states and districts would assess families’ experiences with, and attitudes on, school engagement, school safety, and the overall school environment. The Department’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and

Violence Prevention provides technical assistance and information resources to the Nation’s institutions of higher education.

Ms. Hyde: In cooperation with ONDCP, the Drug Free Communities program provides funding to support substance abuse prevention in over 700 local communities. The Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant program has provided funding to 47 States, 8 territories, and 12 tribes to develop state and community infrastructure to support more than 800 communities in the development of comprehensive community plans and implementation of evidence-based practices and programs to reduce substance abuse and its consequences. The Offender Re-entry Program, Juvenile Drug Courts, and the Assertive Adolescent and Family Treatment (AAFT) programs provide clinical services designed to reduce youth drug use.

What collaborative opportunities exist for your agency, both within and outside of the government, to prevent youth from initiating drug use in the future?

Mr. Jennings: We are actively engaged in the successful, interagency-administered Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant program. Second, we are actively engaged in the development of the Prevention-Prepared Communities initiative, an Administration priority, as discussed in the *National Drug Control Strategy*. Third, we provide the education sector

with important and timely information on drug abuse prevention. In the near future, we plan to update our popular publication “Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent’s Guide to Prevention” and create a new companion guide, “Drug-Free Students: An Educator’s Guide to Prevention.”

Ms. Hyde: As SAMHSA implements the action steps of its first strategic initiative, collaboration will be essential for our success in preventing youth from initiating drug use. Lessons learned from the past lead us to the next phase of prevention programming. The development of Prevention-Prepared Communities, a flagship initiative of ONDCP in collaboration with other Federal agencies, brings comprehensive prevention to scale in states, communities, and tribes. Also, finally, it puts into place the infrastructure needed in states to support community efforts.

Ms. Robinson: Many opportunities exist to collaborate with OJP through partnering on grant programs and continued involvement in interagency work groups that focus on substance abuse prevention. In addition, many government-private partnerships have been established through PACT 360. To date, lead law enforcement agencies in over 30 states have been recruited. In FY 2011, we will embark on a project to collaborate with the National Sheriff’s Association to incorporate PACT 360 resources and tools into the Neighborhood Watch Program.

Director Awards \$85.6 Million in Grants to Help Communities Prevent Drug Use

On August 31, National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske announced \$22 million in new Drug Free Communities Support Program (DFC) grants to 169 communities, as well as 16 new DFC Mentoring grants.

These grants are in addition to the \$63 million in continuation grants simultaneously released to 549 currently funded DFC coalitions and 7 DFC continuation mentoring coalitions, for a total of 741 DFC grantees in FY 2010. The grants provide community coalitions needed support for preventing and reducing youth substance use.

"The Drug Free Communities Support Program embodies the Obama Administration's dedication to community-based prevention efforts that protect the health of our young people,"



said Director Kerlikowske.

The DFC program is directed by ONDCP, and administered in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental

Health Services Administration. The program provides grants of up to \$625,000 over five years to community coalitions that facilitate citizen participation in

local youth drug prevention efforts. The 169 new grantees were selected from 521 applicants through a peer-reviewed, competitive process.

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focus on youth, target common risk factors for a variety of problems, and cover a range of domains in young people's lives.

Three overarching goals will help ensure our success:

- ❖ Drug use prevention must become a national public health priority. Prevention requires a paradigm shift from one that involves waiting for an illness to occur, to one that focuses on what will be good for a child five, ten, or more years from now. Public health recognizes the importance of identifying known risk factors and then intervening to address them, as well as promoting known protective factors.

- ❖ Our national community-based prevention infrastructure must be further developed. In a public health context, the health of a population is understood to result from the interaction of a range of

factors beyond the individual. In the case of children, youth, and young adults, a public health model calls for the combined involvement of families, schools, health and other child service systems, neighborhoods, and communities to address the interwoven factors that prevent substance abuse. This system must help communities become prepared for prevention and support states in their efforts to expand upon the number of such communities. To support such a system, we must take the concepts of Federal, state, and local collaboration to an entirely new level.

- ❖ The future prevention workforce must be better prepared. Workforce numbers remain insufficient to carry out research and service programs aimed at preventing substance use disorders. Prevention as a specialty is still a rarity, and most professional training programs in major disciplines, such as medicine, education, psychology, social work, and public health, do not include core components on substance use and its prevention.

We stand at an important crossroads in prevention opportunities. According to the recently released 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 21.8 million Americans age 12 and older were past-month users of illicit drugs in 2009, a 9 percent increase from 20.1 million in 2008. At the same time, the age of drug initiation has dropped to 17.0 while perceptions of the harm in using drugs continue to decrease among youth.

Those of us seeking ways to reduce drug use and its consequences must think strategically about what's needed, where we need to go, and how we will get there. Much is happening on the Federal, state, and local level, so it is critical we stay more engaged than ever.

Your continued support and input are essential to our mutual success. I encourage you to send us your thoughts and suggestions via our website at http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/utilities/contact_form.html.

In Aftermath of Historic Drug Bust, Arizona Coalition Launches Plan to ‘Reclaim the Neighborhoods’



Members of the Casa Grande Alliance, from left: Kathy Zak, Cindy Schaider, Casa Grande Police Officer Thomas Anderson, and Rodolfo Calvillo.

On April 6, officers from Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies held a press conference to announce the end of a seven-month undercover operation in Pinal County, Arizona, as well as the arrest of 24 suspects from the cities of Casa Grande and Coolidge on drug trafficking and other charges.

“Operation Fertile Ground,” the largest drug operation in the county’s history, was a joint effort by the Casa Grande Police Department, the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s Mobile Enforcement Unit, and the Pinal County Attorney’s Office. During two weeks of raids, officers seized large quantities of methamphetamine, crack and powder cocaine, and PCP.

The arrests took most residents by surprise. But not Cindy Schaider. As Executive Director of the Casa Grande Alliance, a Drug Free Communities coalition, Schaider had been alerted to the operation by law enforcement. The police not only wanted her to know about it, they wanted the Alliance’s support. This extraordinary level of trust created a critical “early warning system” that allowed the coalition to develop a comprehensive and timely response.

Even before the arrests were announced, Schaider and other members of the Casa Grande Alliance were busy preparing a three-part community rehabilitation plan. “Big operations like this can be disruptive,” Schaider said. “We knew we had to help the families of those involved. We knew we had to reclaim the neighborhoods.”

The first phase of the plan was to prepare the community for the aftershocks of the operation. Anticipating increased demand for treatment (and potential drug-seeking behavior) by addicts whose drug sources would soon be cut off, Alliance members distributed packets of information on drug prevention and treatment to local healthcare providers. “Within days of Operation Fertile Ground’s implementation,”

said Schaider, “every doctor’s office in the area had the information in hand.”

Phase two of the Alliance’s plan involved reaching out to schools to help the children who would be affected by the arrest of a parent or guardian in the special police action. Immediately after the press conference, police provided Schaider with the list of indicted individuals. Alliance members affiliated with local schools then used that list to identify affected families and to arrange for special care and support for students.

The third phase of the plan was to work with residents in areas where the perpetrators lived, in hopes of starting neighborhood Block Watches. Using the indictment list to identify target areas, local law enforcement created geomaps, which, along with environmental scans and informant interviews in key neighborhoods, helped the Alliance better understand the dynamics of the community and how drug activity can be part of a neighborhood’s culture.

“Sometimes when you talk about informing on your neighbors,” Schaider observed, “you’re talking about friends informing on friends, grandparents informing on grandchildren.” Heavy gang activity in the neighborhoods created additional barriers to completing the project.

“This is a long-term problem,” said Schaider. “We didn’t want to go barging in like we had all the answers. We want to partner with the community, and that’s a process that must be done intentionally and carefully.”

“It took the coalition and our contacts in the community to build a solid foundation of trust and then follow through with the plan.”
– Cindy Schaider

The Casa Grande Alliance was formed in 1989, when a handful of concerned residents met to discuss how they could help mobilize the community against drugs. Today, the group boasts 40 members – all volunteers except for the executive director and two part-time staff.

The Alliance became a grantee in ONDCP’s Drug Free Communities Support program eight years ago, and in 2009, the group won the “Dose of Prevention” award from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA).

The power of an effective coalition is greater than the size of its membership, said Schaider. “There’s no way just a handful of people could have responded to this crisis. It took the coalition and our contacts in the community to build a solid foundation of trust and then follow through with the plan.”

DEA Spearheads First Nationwide Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), joined by ONDCP, government, community, public health, and law enforcement groups, held a nationwide prescription drug "Take-Back Day" on September 25. The DEA and local partners collected potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unneeded prescription drugs for destruction at more than 9,000 collection sites around the country.

Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States, with prescription drugs ranking behind marijuana as the second-most abused category of drugs. While these medications are safe and effective when taken as directed for legitimate medical purposes, they are just as dangerous and deadly as illicit drugs when taken for non-medical purposes or ingested accidentally.

Because prescription drugs are legal, they are easily accessible. In many cases, prescription drugs are kept in the home medicine cabinet long after therapy has been completed, thus making these drugs readily available for potential diversion and abuse.

A recent study found more than 70 percent of people who misused prescription pain medications such as Oxycontin (oxycodone) and Vicodin (hydrocodone) say they got them from friends or relatives.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports the number of unintentional drug-induced deaths involving opioid pain medications more than tripled between 1999 and 2006.

Because of the significant public health risks posed by expired, unused, or unneeded prescription drugs, it is extremely important they are properly disposed of, and not left where they can be used for non-medical reasons or accidentally ingested. One of the best ways to dispose of prescription drugs properly is through a Take-Back program.

Other partners in the National Take-Back Day included the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, the Federation of State Medical Boards, and the National District Attorneys Association.

For information about how to dispose of unused medicines, please visit <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm>.

Red Ribbon Week: Sparked by Tragedy, A Celebration of Drug-Free Living

The Office of National Drug Control Policy joins our Federal partners and millions of other Americans in observing this year's Red Ribbon Week.

Twenty-five years ago, Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent, was kidnapped, tortured, and killed by Mexican drug traffickers. His death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangers of drugs and the international scope of the trade.

Spurred by the horrific events of February 1985, Kiki's friends and family formed "Camarena Clubs" in his hometown of Calexico, California, and parent organizations called on communities to wear red ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to prevent drug abuse. Over time, the Red Ribbon movement grew into a nationwide effort to celebrate healthy, drug-free living.

Red Ribbon Week, always held the last week in October, pays tribute to Camarena each year as it motivates millions of young people across the country to choose to live drug free. Out of the loss of a brave DEA agent, came resilience and mobilization.

Most Americans have witnessed first-hand how alcohol and other drugs rob loved ones of prosperity, health, and happiness. ONDCP encourages you to use Red Ribbon Week as an



Photo courtesy the Camarena family

Enrique "Kiki" Camarena

opportunity to create dialog with youth, to mobilize your community, and to honor the law enforcement officers who work every day to keep communities safe from drug use and its consequences.

For more information about Red Ribbon Week (including 20 ways to promote the event), visit DEA's website at: http://www.justice.gov/dea/ongoing/red_ribbon/redribbon_links.html.

National Guard Program Helps Young People 'Stay on Track'

"Stay on Track," a program provided by the National Guard in communities it serves, offers an innovative approach to substance abuse prevention for students in middle school. The evidence-based curriculum focuses on cognitive, social, and emotional development and is designed for classroom implementation by certified National Guard instructors and teachers for students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

Along with information on alcohol, marijuana, hallucinogens, and other drugs, the 12-week program offers lessons on health, decision-making, goal-setting, communication skills, interpersonal relations, and media influences, with the goal of helping kids learn to make decisions that will increase their chances of success.

"Stay on Track" was developed by the National Center for Prevention and Research Solutions, in partnership with the National Guard Counterdrug Program. Since 2006, the initiative has helped more than 250,000 students throughout the United States stay on track in their decision to remain drug free.

For school year 2010-2011, "Stay on Track" will be implemented in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the District of Columbia.

For more information on the National Guard Counterdrug Program, please visit <http://ngbcounterdrug.ng.mil>. To learn more about NCPRS and "Stay on Track," visit <http://www.ncprs.org/index.htm>.