

Inside This Issue

Building a stronger America,
By David K. Mineta..... 1

Two approaches to preventing
prescription drug abuse..... 2

President proclaims October as
National Prevention Month..... 3

Prevention essential to America's
health, by Regina M. Benjamin 4

Strategies for addressing substance
abuse on campus..... 5

Policing and prevention, working
together..... 6



**Office of National
Drug Control Policy**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp>

Note: The ONDCP website was recently revised and moved to the above address.

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

Preventing Drug Use to Build a Stronger America

By David K. Mineta, MSW
Deputy Director for Demand Reduction

America's young people deserve every opportunity to live up to their full potential, and exposure to effective drug prevention programming in our schools, homes, and communities improves their chances to do so.

In keeping with President Obama's goal of winning the future and investing in what makes America stronger, preventing drug use is among the Administration's highest national drug-policy priorities. To highlight this priority, the President has officially designated October as National Substance Abuse Prevention Month. (Read the text of the Prevention Proclamation on page 3.)

Findings from the [2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#) show that, while rates of illicit drug use were unchanged from 2009-2010, rates increased between 2008 and 2010, mostly due to increased marijuana use. At the same time, we continue to see a decline in the perceived risk in marijuana use among teens (see chart on page 5). This is particularly troubling, as research shows drug use among youth typically increases one to two years after a weakening of the perceived danger of using drugs.

The Administration remains committed to a public health and safety approach to preventing substance abuse. Examples of current ONDCP-supported prevention efforts include the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program.

On August 29, ONDCP announced \$12.3 million in new DFC grants to 87



David K. Mineta

communities across the country, as well as 20 new DFC mentoring grants. These are in addition to the nearly \$76 million in continuation grants simultaneously released to 607 currently funded DFC coalitions and 12 DFC mentoring continuation coalitions. The grants provide community coalitions with needed support to prevent and reduce youth substance use.

Evaluation of the DFC program indicates that since January 2002, past 30-day use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana declined significantly in both middle and high school-aged youth in areas served by DFC coalitions.

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is frequently the only media message to counter the barrage of pro-drug messaging to which young people are exposed. The Campaign reaches teens across the country with a highly visible positive message. Its

Two Approaches to Preventing Prescription Drug Abuse

ONDCP Update recently conducted interviews with two individuals whose organizations are on the forefront of efforts to address the prescription drug problem in Florida. Taking part in the discussion were **Karen Perry**, Executive Director of the Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Task Force in West Palm Beach, and **Timothy Wagner**, Director of the South Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which recently was named Outstanding HIDTA of 2011.

Here's what they had to say:



Karen Perry



Timothy Wagner

Describe your efforts to address prescription drug abuse.

Ms. Perry

The NOPE Task Force has learned that fighting prescription drug abuse takes a comprehensive community approach. That's why we have developed strategic partnerships in our initiatives, which include community education, family support, and purposeful advocacy to push for stronger anti-drug laws.

The cornerstone of NOPE's work is high-impact presentations to students in middle schools, high schools, and universities. In these presentations, parents and friends from the local area share personal stories about loved ones they have lost. Local law enforcement officials also provide details about specific investigations, including crime scene photos, and speak on topics such as drug addiction, underage drinking, and the danger of combining prescription medications. Our goal is to prevent early onset of substance abuse and empower youth to get help for those who are abusing drugs.

Because parents are crucial to successful prevention efforts, the NOPE Task Force also organizes special presentations for parents and families. Members of the community share personal stories, and NOPE

volunteers discuss issues such as prescription drug abuse and the importance of family meals.

Mr. Wagner

The South Florida HIDTA supports cooperative Federal, state, and local law enforcement task forces that develop and execute joint strategies to target the most significant drug threats in the South Florida region, especially those that impact the rest of the state and the Nation.

In 2007, South Florida HIDTA's largest task force, South Broward Drug Enforcement Unit, began a major effort to address the growing epidemic of illicit pain clinics operating in the area. Several high-level investigations have emerged from this initiative, including successful investigations by HIDTA task forces in other areas.

Our approach has been to target the highest echelons responsible, including owners and operators of multiple pain clinics, corrupt physicians, money launderers, facilitators, and mid-level organizers.

Since 2007, we have increased our efforts in this area, and at least seven of our task forces are currently conducting significant operations. For example, Operation Oxy Alley, a two-year investigation of pain clinics under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, was initiated and

led by South Florida task forces. In August 2011, 32 individuals – including 13 doctors – were indicted as a result of the operation. The defendants owned and operated multiple clinics that had prescribed over 20 million pills and profited more than \$40 million. To date, \$9.3 million in cash and bank accounts have been seized.

What challenges have you faced in implementing these initiatives?

Ms. Perry

One challenge for us is finding surviving family members who are willing to join us on stage at schools and community centers to share their personal stories.

Unfortunately, there is a stigma associated with losing a loved one to substance abuse. Some people are reluctant to participate because they are ashamed, or because the pain of their grief is too great.

A similar challenge is attracting audiences for our parent presentations. Parents are often simply too tired or too busy to attend. Others may stay away because they think substance abuse is a concern for other families, not theirs.

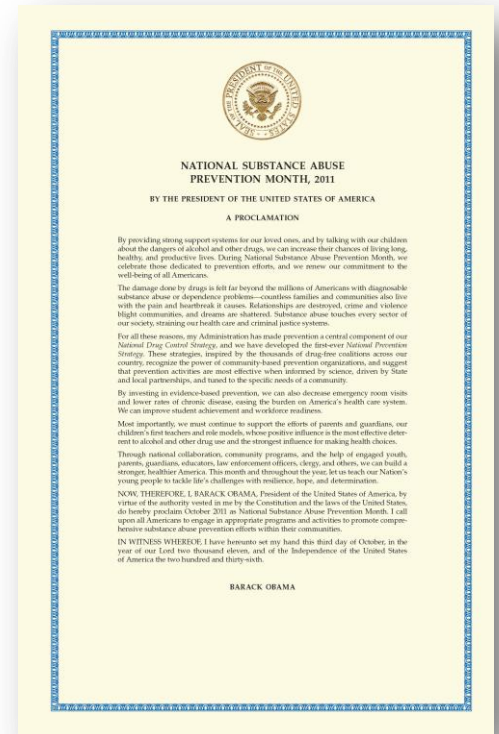
See *INTERVIEW*, page 3

October 2011 Proclaimed As National Substance Abuse Prevention Month

On October 1, President Obama released a proclamation (shown at right) officially establishing October 2011 as National Substance Abuse Prevention Month. The purpose is to highlight the fact that preventing substance abuse is a smart, cost-effective, and common-sense approach to improving public health and safety.

During October, prevention will be the theme of ONDCP's website, which will feature [blogs](#) by national and local prevention leaders, a directory of Federally supported prevention programs, and a [Law Enforcement Resource Portal](#) offering prevention resources for law enforcement officials.

A number of events sponsored by our Federal partners and others will take place in October, including Red Ribbon Week; National Drug Facts Week, organized by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and National Take-Back Day, spearheaded by the Drug Enforcement Administration. More information about community-based prevention is available on ONDCP's website at www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/prevention.



INTERVIEW, continued from page 2

We depend on the generosity of businesses, private donations, and community grants to pay for our presentations, print materials, and awareness initiatives. Through their support, we reach many people. But limited resources prevent us from reaching countless others. Our hope is to expand the Task Force to give the program much broader reach and, as a result, lower the frequency and impact of prescription drug abuse throughout the country.

Mr. Wagner

Florida has enacted comprehensive legislation aimed at controlling diversion of pharmaceutical drugs, and many of the provisions are already in force. We believe these laws will have a profound effect on the rogue pain clinics, doctors, and pharmacies responsible for a large portion of unlawful diversions supplying Florida and other states.

Already, we are seeing traffickers shift their strategies in reaction to the pressure placed on their supply by increased law enforcement and enhanced legislation. Our challenge will be to quickly identify emerging trafficker strategies and adapt our initiatives to confront them.

As traffickers move out of Florida, we anticipate that many will relocate to states with less-effective regulation and insufficient law enforcement resources. We must be vigilant in tracking this displacement and assisting other regions with intelligence and operational know-how to help them stay ahead of the problem.

State and local law enforcement agencies are facing significant budget shortfalls. Although the HIDTA task force approach acts as a force multiplier and leverages Federal, state, and local resources, it is a challenge to maintain manpower commitments in our initiatives.

What next steps are planned for maintaining momentum in the effort to combat prescription drug abuse?

Ms. Perry

Every day, nearly 2,500 teens – most of them under age 15 – try prescription drugs for the first time to get high. NOPE Task Force continues to establish strategic partnerships so we can expand our presence at schools and educate more families about the consequences of abusing

prescription drugs.

We also plan to expand our presentations to include healthcare professionals and patients, with discussions about the dangers of over-prescribing or combining prescription medications. Our ongoing awareness campaigns are putting names and faces on this epidemic as we work to change attitudes and behaviors one person at a time.

Mr. Wagner

To maintain our momentum, we must:

- Closely monitor emerging trafficker strategies and counter with effective law enforcement responses;
- Continue to provide training to law enforcement officers to enable them to better address emerging pharmaceutical diversion threats;
- Help provide instruction to physicians and healthcare providers on substance abuse; and
- Continue with HIDTA demand-reduction initiatives that focus on educating our youth on the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Preventing Drug Abuse: An Essential Ingredient to Promoting America's Health

By Regina M. Benjamin, MD, MBA
U.S. Surgeon General

Preventing disease before it starts is critical to helping all Americans live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. As a Nation, we are challenged by poor diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use, alcohol misuse, and drug abuse, including the abuse of prescription medicines. Incorporating prevention strategies into our everyday lives and shifting the focus of our healthcare system from one based on sickness and disease to one that emphasizes prevention and wellness allows us to prevent many of the diseases that cause lost productivity, disability, and premature death.

Drug use and excessive alcohol use take a daily toll on the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Alcohol and other drugs can impede judgment and lead to dangerous risk-taking behavior. Preventing this abuse and misuse improves quality of life and academic performance, reduces crime, violence, and motor vehicle accidents, and promotes safer home environments and neighborhoods. Employers experience lower absenteeism and fewer accidents, resulting in more productive workplaces.

The Affordable Care Act recognizes prevention is an essential component of healthcare reform and makes a substantial investment in this commitment. As part of the Affordable Care Act, President Obama signed an Executive Order on June 10, 2010, creating the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council (the National Prevention Council), which I chair. There is also an Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health, made up of outside experts appointed by the President, which brings a non-Federal perspective to this effort.



**Vice Admiral Regina M. Benjamin,
U.S. Surgeon General.**

“The best form of prevention is creating environments that empower young people not to drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.”

The Council comprises 17 Federal agencies, including the Office of National Drug Control Policy. It is charged with providing coordination and leadership among all executive departments and agencies with respect to prevention, wellness, and health promotion practices. The aim is to elevate prevention activities and incorporate a health focus into all government activities – not just in hospitals and clinics, but in areas such as transport, building design, pollution, and social justice which can affect health outcomes and lead to health disparities.

In June 2011, the President released the first National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy (National Prevention Strategy), a comprehensive plan that will provide the foundation for our Nation's

prevention efforts. The Strategy has the goal of increasing the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life. To do this, seven priority areas aimed at addressing the leading causes of death will be tackled, including illicit drug use and excessive alcohol use.

The National Prevention Strategy calls for:

- Federal support for state, tribal, local, and territorial implementation and enforcement of alcohol control policies;
- Identifying alcohol and other substance abuse disorders early and providing brief intervention, referral, and treatment; and
- Reducing inappropriate access to and use of prescription drugs.

It also acknowledges that the best form of prevention is creating environments that empower young people not to drink alcohol or use illicit drugs.

These recommendations are aligned with those in the [National Drug Control Strategy](#), thus ensuring compatibility and coordination with the Administration's existing plan to reduce drug use and its consequences.

I am extremely grateful for ONDCP's collaboration in helping develop and implement the National Prevention Strategy. Together, as a Nation, we must all work to support the National Prevention Strategy and improve the health and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. Through these efforts and increasing the use of preventive services, real economic, health, and societal benefits can be realized by all Americans.

Further information about the National Prevention Strategy can be found at <http://www.healthcare.gov/center/councils/nphpphc/index.html>.

Educating the Educators: Strategies for Addressing Substance Abuse on Campus

Twenty million students are enrolled in our universities and colleges. We must help them understand the consequences of underage drinking, high-risk drinking, and drug use.

As President Obama said in his State of the Union address earlier this year, our country is committed to out-innovating, out-building, and out-educating the rest of the world. However, alcohol and drug use and their consequences negatively affect every sector of society vital to winning the future, including the education of our youth.

Now is the time to raise awareness by supplying our Nation's educators with information and the tools they need to help students avoid the harmful effects of underage drinking, high-risk drinking, and drug use.

Approximately 25 percent of college students report negative academic consequences from their drinking, such as missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and

receiving lower grades overall. Every year, nearly 2,000 students in higher education die from alcohol-related incidents, and 97,000 are victims of sexual abuse.

The Safer California Universities Project, a randomized study of 14 college campuses, shows that environmental strategies – approaches designed to change aspects of the environment that contribute to substance abuse – help reduce alcohol use among students.

Half of the 14 sites in the study used environmental strategies, including roadside driving-under-the-influence checks, police operations using underage decoys to enforce laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors, party patrols to enforce laws regarding provision of alcohol to minors or

disturbing the peace, social host ordinances, and use of campus and local media to draw attention to the consequences of breaking the law.

The study showed that general principles of deterrence, combined with reductions in the availability of alcohol, resulted in less intoxication in off-campus social gatherings (including those at fraternity and sorority houses) and in settings where alcohol is sold, when compared to sites without such interventions.

Among the factors contributing to the success of interventions were the use of campus and local media to highlight the consequences of allowing underage and high-risk drinking at parties, selling alcohol to minors, and starting the intervention on or about the first day of school.

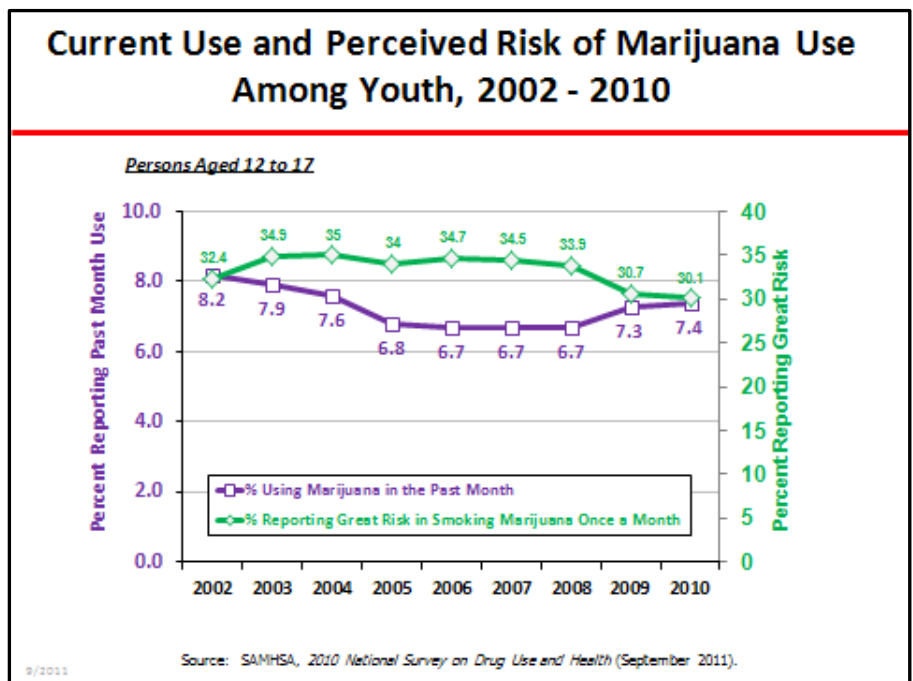
MINETA, continued from page 1

effectiveness is supported by an independent research study that showed youth exposed to the Media Campaign were less likely to begin marijuana use compared to those not exposed. We regret that President Obama's \$45 million request for this vital program is in serious peril.

Law enforcement can play a critical part in keeping young people from using drugs. There are now 20 HIDTA grantees involved in and funding prevention initiatives in the United States. The HIDTA members work with locally based community coalitions and adhere to evidence-based prevention practices, such as community mobilization and organizational change.

The Administration's new [Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan](#) provides a blueprint for reducing prescription drug abuse, our fastest-growing drug problem. Its four-pronged strategy includes education, increased and improved prescription drug monitoring programs, disposal, and law enforcement.

Substance abuse prevention saves lives



and cuts costs. Ignoring prevention translates into major costs to society in healthcare and substance abuse treatment, academic performance, workplace productivity, military preparedness, and increased crime.

Please join ONDCP and our Federal partners this month in promoting the important role substance abuse prevention plays in keeping our youth, families, and communities healthy and productive.

When Policing and Prevention Come Together, Kids Have a Ball

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program, administered by ONDCP, provides assistance to Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug-trafficking regions of the United States. While its mission is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs and dismantle drug trafficking organizations, ONDCP understands the value of approaching the drug problem in a balanced manner and is focusing increasingly on prevention initiatives.

Many law enforcement agencies have substantial experience in implementing problem-oriented policing strategies and are well positioned to promote and participate in community-based drug prevention programs. Collaboration across multiple agencies that play a role in reducing drug use is vital to improving outcomes, and law enforcement agencies are critical partners in community-based prevention strategies that help reduce youth involvement in drug-related criminal activity.

In 2010, ONDCP awarded \$800,000 in discretionary funding to 12 HIDTAs to



Photos by Carolyn Moffatt

In Richmond, Virginia, members of the Boys & Girls Club participating in Badges for Baseball race onto the field for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 19.

support participation in drug awareness and education activities. Currently, 20 HIDTAs, including all 5 Southwest Border HIDTA regions, fund prevention activities. To put this in perspective, only four HIDTAs funded prevention initiatives in 2008.

Using evidence-based prevention practices, HIDTA staff members partner with community-based coalitions and other organizations to tailor prevention messages to youth, share their time and resources, and use juvenile justice

programs to help prevent and reduce gang and other criminal activity. An example of HIDTA involvement with prevention initiatives is the partnership between the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA (W/B HIDTA) and Badges for Baseball. Created by the Cal Ripkin, Sr., Foundation, Badges for Baseball teaches life lessons to disadvantaged youth through baseball and softball. Kids learn how to play our national pastime while working with police officers, who serve as mentors and role models, delivering lessons on character building, developing positive values, and drug use prevention.

In September, the W/B HIDTA used \$50,000 of its 2010 prevention funding to bring Badges for Baseball to Richmond, Virginia. The funding will enable the HIDTA to join forces with the Boys & Girls Club and the Richmond Police Department to work with at-risk youth from disadvantaged communities.

Badges for Baseball is among a number of W/B HIDTA projects organized in partnership with the Richmond Police Department, the Commonwealth's Attorney for Richmond, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia, the Virginia State Police, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Marshals Service, Boys & Girls Club of Richmond, and two local community associations to improve the quality of life in two public housing projects.

Benjamin Tucker, ONDCP's Deputy Director for State, Local, and Tribal Affairs, speaks to participants at the Badges for Baseball event in Richmond.

