



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Commissioner

September 11, 2012

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
Nonpublic School Administrators
Administrators of Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

FROM: Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student and Field Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Gantwerk".

SUBJECT: Prescription Drug Campaign: The Right Prescription for New Jersey

This is to request your support of the public awareness campaign titled *The Right Prescription for New Jersey* to be observed during the week of September 24-29, 2012. You can assist by disseminating the attached flyer to all staff, students and parents of enrolled K-12 students in your school district and posting the attached banner on the school district and the school's websites for the week of the campaign. You are also encouraged to coordinate with the local parent-teacher organization or association, the local Municipal Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and local substance abuse prevention agencies to consider other ways to support the campaign.

The campaign is a partnership among the New Jersey Department of Education, United States Attorney's office (District of New Jersey), Drug Enforcement Administration (New Jersey division), New Jersey Attorney General's office (Division of Consumer Affairs), New Jersey State Commission on Investigations, New Jersey Prevention Network and Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness of the problem of prescription drug abuse and promote responsible management of prescription drugs.

Prescription drug abuse is not a new problem, but it is one that deserves renewed attention. According to data reported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in December 2011, prescription and over-the-counter medications account for most of the commonly abused illicit drugs by high school seniors. For example, nearly 1 in 12 high school seniors reported nonmedical use of Vicodin and 1 in 20 reported abuse of OxyContin. When asked how prescription narcotics were obtained for nonmedical use, 70 percent of 12th graders said they were given to them by a friend or relative.

In response to this ongoing, high-risk behavior among adolescents, *The Right Prescription for New Jersey* campaign will promote the following five-step challenge of the American Medicine Chest Challenge, which is featured on the attached flyer:

1. Take inventory of your prescription and over-the-counter medicine.
2. Secure your medicine.
3. Dispose of your unused, unwanted, and expired medicine in your home or at your local police departments during the official DEA's Take Back programs or at an American Medicine Chest Challenge Disposal site.
4. Take your medicine(s) exactly as prescribed.
5. Talk to your children about the dangers of prescription drug abuse; they are listening.

In addition to school district's dissemination of the attached flyer and posting of the web banner, the campaign will target New Jersey parents through several multi-media messages, including 30-second radio advertisements, billboard postings, train and bus advertisements, and web banners on some state agency websites. Additionally, statewide media and educational events will be held during the week of September 24-29, 2012, which coincide with National Prescription Drug Awareness Week, and end with the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Take Back program on September 29, 2012, that is aimed at cleaning out home medicine cabinets of unused, unwanted and expired prescription medication.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in disseminating the attached flyer and for considering other local activities to support *The Right Prescription for New Jersey* campaign.

BG/SM

Attachments

c: Christopher Cerf
David Hesse
Susan Martz
Gary Vermeire
NJ LEE Group
Garden State Coalition of Schools
Executive County Superintendents