

"Clean Out the Cabinet"

The logo for Youthnet, featuring the word "Youth" in red and "net." in blue, with a small blue dot above the "Y". The logo is centered within a white rectangular box that has a black border. This white box is itself centered within a larger black rectangular box.

**Youthnet.**

**2007 Campaign**

# Prescription drug abuse:

- National trends suggest that prescription drug abuse will shortly exceed illegal drug abuse.
- Number of Americans abusing prescription drugs doubled between 1992 and 2003 has more than doubled. 22.6 million, 9.2%
- Non-medical use of pain relievers by young adults currently at 6.4%, up from 2002 numbers.

# An Epidemic in Utah

- Utah currently leads the nation in prescription drug abuse.
  - Utah has the highest rate in the nation for non-medical use of prescription pain killers according to federal studies. 6.5%, mostly under the age of 25, with 7.88% of that number 12-17 years, 13.49% aged 18-25 years.
  - Last year, more Utahns died as a result of over-the-counter or prescription drug overdosed than died in automobile accidents.
  - Thousands of Utahns live with addiction with terrible effects on families and society.

# Young people are particularly at risk:

- Younger users do not understand the legal issues involved with prescription drug abuse.
  - It is a felony to share prescription drugs.
  - It is illegal for prescription drugs to be used for purposes other than those prescribed.
  - There is a sense in younger people that prescription drugs are “safer” than illegal drugs, thus contributing to abuse and accidental death by overdose.
  - They have been raised in a “self medicating” culture.
  - The Elderly do not always understand the dangers accompanying prescriptions that they are taking.

# Effects on community at large:

- Home break-ins
  - Drug seekers check obituaries
  - Drug seekers, (including friends and family members), often go through homes and medicine cabinets when they visit.
  - Drug seekers stalk Seniors and others in grocery stores and pharmacies for prescriptions to steal.

# What prescription drugs are being abused?

- Many Prescription drugs:
  - **Opiates:** Percocet, Percodan, Vicodin, Loratab, Oxycontin, Methadone, etc.
  - **Stimulants:** Adderall, Ritalin, Dexedrine, etc.
  - **CNS Depressants:** Valium, Librium, Xanax, etc.

# Impact on the community at large:

- Prescription drug abuse contributes to crime.
  - About 70% on all those incarcerated have a problem with substance abuse.
    - Substance abuse is a component in most crimes that are committed in Utah.

# “Clean out Your Cabinet”

- It is a recognized fact that a major source of the prescription drugs that are being abused come from home medicine cabinets.
- Prescription drugs used improperly are recognized as “gateway” drugs to more serious abuse and addiction.
  - Prescription Opiate abuse often leads to Heroin abuse.

# Something we all can do:

- We calculated that there were as many as 450,000 dosages in medicine cabinets in the Springville Mapleton area. (Assume 30 dosages per household of expired, retained, or currently being used prescription drugs.)

**Picture 2-55 gal. steel drums, 2' dia. X 3' tall full of pills..... In Springville and Mapleton. Provo = approx. 30,000 households or 4-55 gal. drums of drugs....almost a million dosages!**

# This is a lot of pills!



A 55  
Gallon  
Steel  
drum  
full...

is a lot of pills!

# Christy Porucznik, A State Epidemiologist:

- : "If you have extra prescription drugs, you shouldn't share them with anyone else or leave them where someone could take them without your knowledge. Because when we are seeing these higher numbers of recreational drug use of prescription drugs--especially among younger people--I mean that's probably where they're getting them."

# Clean out Your Cabinet: What you can do.

- Review the contents of your medicine cabinet often, discarding unused or expired prescriptions.
- Lock-up and secure prescriptions that you elect to keep.
  - You can use lock boxes that can be purchased at any hardware store.

# Safely dispose of unused or expired prescriptions:

- With the rise in prescription drug abuse, three federal agencies issued guidelines earlier this year for disposing of medications without harming the environment.
  - Remove unused, unneeded or expired prescription drugs from their original containers.
  - Mix prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, like used coffee grounds or cat litter, and put them in impermeable, nondescript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags.
  - Throw containers in the trash.

# Let's take action!

- “Clean out the Cabinet” is the single most significant action that can be taken immediately, by everyone!
- It is a win-win for everyone.
- Offers great potential benefit at the State and Federal level.