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**ADMH ENCOURAGES TEENS AND PARENTS TO GET THE FACTS DURING  
“TALK ABOUT PRESCRIPTIONS MONTH”**

*New NIDA video aimed at teens presents the real dangers about painkiller abuse*

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Mental Health wants to encourage teens and parents to learn the facts about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Every day in the United States, 2,500 American teens ages 12 to 17 illegally take a prescription pain reliever for the first time. October is “Talk About Prescriptions Month,” and the National Institute on Drug Abuse is reaching out to teens through an educational video launched recently to promote the observance.

The video features NIDA scientists explaining the risks and dangers of abusing painkillers. NIDA hopes teens will watch the video at their Web site for teens, <http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov/> to learn about these dangers and get safety tips to keep in mind when they get a prescription from their doctors. According to a survey, more than 16 million Americans age 12 and older took a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative just for the effect, at least once in the previous year.

Kent Hunt, associate commissioner for the department’s Division of Substance Abuse Services, says, “Prescription drugs are essential to our health. However, they also represent a growing problem in Alabama. Increasing numbers of people are taking prescription drugs just for the effect, not the medicinal purpose for which they were created.” He goes on to say, “I encourage everyone to visit the NIDA Web site to learn about appropriate usage, addictive properties, and other important facts about prescription drugs. Most of all, I encourage teens to talk to a responsible adult about prescription drug abuse. They can be live savers when used appropriately, but can become serious life problems when used inappropriately.”

In addition to the new painkillers video, NIDA offers teens and parents other resources about prescription drug abuse including tips about safeguarding and properly disposing of medications, the Sara Bellum Blog, and much more.

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**RESOURCES**

Information about substance abuse treatment is available from the ADMH Division of Substance Abuse Services at (334) 242-3961 or by visiting the Web site at [www.mh.alabama.gov](http://www.mh.alabama.gov).

The National Institute of Drug Abuse Web site contains a large amount of information regarding substance abuse and statistics. Visit <http://www.nida.nih.gov/>.