



# Board of Education of Allegany County

108 Washington Street, P.O. Box 1724  
Cumberland, Maryland 21501-1724  
Telephone (301) 759-2000

**William J. AuMiller**  
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Allegany County Residents,

We need your help!

There is concern about the availability of illegal drug accessibility to the youth in our county. It is a fact that prescription medications and over-the-counter (OTC) medications commonly found in the home of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other relatives, neighbors and friends are being sold, used and abused. A good example of this is that grade school children and teens are taking these medications from the medicine cabinets or other places in the home and distributing and/or selling them in schools.

Teens have found that some prescription drugs and common cold medications (with dextromethorphan as a main ingredient) provide a "high" similar to illegal drugs. This is sometimes referred to as "pharming" or "robotripping."

Teens point to personal or family-related stress as a major reason why they misuse prescription drugs. Sources of stressful feelings include:

- \*Anxiety about friendships, romantic relationships and family life;
- \* Fear about academic success, high school tests or college entrance exams; and
- \* Difficulty balancing homework, after-school jobs and extracurricular activities.

Parents are urged to learn the signs associated with illegal drugs and with prescription and OTC drug misuse and talk to their teens about the dangers of using them.

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign provides information on dangerous drug use trends and offers resources to help parents prevent drug misuse. Misusing prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs can be dangerous, even deadly. Nearly one-third of all drug abuse in the U.S. involves non-medical misuse of prescription drugs. More worrisome, 13.4 percent of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 have misused prescription drugs at least once.

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign has updated its web site for parents with in-depth information on the risks of misusing prescription and OTC drugs.

[http://theantidrug.com/druginfo/prescription\\_drugs.asp](http://theantidrug.com/druginfo/prescription_drugs.asp)

The Media Campaign needs your help to spread the word about this danger and provide help in preventing it. Other resources that could be helpful are:

\*What Can You Do To Prevent Prescription Drug Misuse-Tips for Parents:

[http://theantidrug.com/drug\\_info/prescription\\_advice\\_checklist.asp](http://theantidrug.com/drug_info/prescription_advice_checklist.asp)

\*Ask the Expert A Question about Prescription Drug Misuse:

[http://theantidurg.com/advice/ask\\_experts\\_prescription.asp](http://theantidurg.com/advice/ask_experts_prescription.asp)

\*Prescription Drugs in the News- Learn more about this dangerous nationwide trend:

[http://theantidrug.com/drug\\_info/prescription\\_news.asp](http://theantidrug.com/drug_info/prescription_news.asp)

\*CESAR Fax- Weekly fax from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

[CESAR@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:CESAR@cesar.umd.edu)

There is mounting concern about methamphetamine production and sale in our neighboring state, West Virginia. Allegany County residents need to be aware of this situation and report suspicious activities to the HELP TIP LINE, 1-800-TIP-US-OFF ext. 222.

We are asking physicians to please help us by pointing out the potential dangers of OTC drugs when they recommend them to patients. Physicians may want to inform patients as to where they should keep prescription/non-prescription medication. Physicians should only prescribe the number of "pain killers" or other medication that they anticipate the patient may need.

Please feel free to direct questions and comments to the Substance Abuse Task Force, 108 Washington Street, Cumberland, MD 21502, or call 301-759-2062.

Thank you for caring.

Substance Abuse Task Force