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U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of New York

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August 28, 2013

Dear Esteemed Superintendent:

As I have done the past few years, I am writing with important information regarding some of the serious issues impacting our teenagers today as a new school year begins to unfold.

Of growing concern to all law enforcement across the District is the emergence of heroin, an illegal narcotic, mixed with fentanyl, a narcotic analgesic that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is a powerful opiate pain reliever typically used after surgery or to treat patients with severe pain. But fentanyl, like many prescription medications, can be deadly when abused.

Fentanyl mixed with heroin is believed to be responsible for a significant number of deaths and overdoses in the Western New York community. In fact, our Office recently indicted a defendant who is accused of selling a heroin/fentanyl mixture which resulted in the death of an individual.

Many who turn to heroin do so after abusing prescription drugs. As the Nation's fastest growing drug problem, we in law enforcement continue to be concerned about the illegal use of prescription drugs. A recent survey by the Partnership at Drugfree.org found that 24% of high school students--more than 5 million kids--have abused prescription drugs, a 33% increase from 2008.

Our Office, along with our law enforcement partners also continue to keep a close eye on the various "synthetic" drugs, including marijuana, sometimes referred to as "K2" or "Spice," and other stimulants, sometimes sold under such names as "bath salts," "Mr. Happy," and "Incense." While the long term effects of these substances is not yet fully known, the short term reactions include agitation, nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat, elevated blood pressure, seizures and hallucinations.

The prosecutors in both our Buffalo and Rochester offices are working extremely hard to bring any person or groups of persons who are trafficking in legal or illegal substances to justice. Arrest and prosecution, however, are only part of the solution. With your assistance, we must continue to educate the students, their parents and the public about the dangers and potential consequences of all of these substances.

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A valuable resource in this effort is the Partnership at Drugfree.org (drugfree.org) which provides very helpful information for school administrators and parents. Enclosed with this letter, you will also find a one-page, easy to read Drug Guide for Parents.

I would be remiss if I did not once again share with you my concerns about the technological threats our teenagers face today. While computers, cellular telephones and the internet are valuable learning and communication tools, they can also lead to danger if not properly monitored.

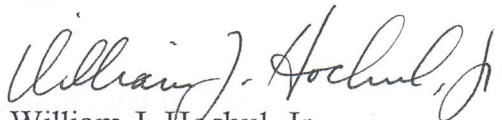
The dangers can consist of stolen identities, and even worse, stolen innocence and freedom. Over the last year, our Office has prosecuted eight defendants for crimes involving human trafficking. These cases included 14 victims, the vast majority teenagers. In many of these cases, contact between the defendant and victim originated through the internet, on social media websites and online advertisements. The numerous child pornography cases we prosecute also invariably involve use of the internet.

A second enclosure, the document entitled "A Message to Parents and Teens" contains additional information about the dangers of both electronic communication and drug abuse. I encourage you to share this information with your staff, teachers, parents and students, posting it on your website, including it in your parent or school newsletters, and hanging it on bulletin boards. An electronic copy is also available for your website or email dissemination.

Should you desire any further information, please contact Public Affairs Officer Barbara Burns at 716-843-5817 or barbara.burns@usdoj.gov. Members of our Office are also available to speak to students and parents. It is my belief that by working proactively together, we can help prevent problems before they arise.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



William J. Hochul, Jr.
United States Attorney,
Western District of New York

A Message to Parents & Teens:

Electronic Communication:



According to Pew Internet Project, 87% of all teens engage in some form of electronic personal communication

Suggested Tips:

- Parents must monitor usage of cell phones and computers inside and outside the home.
- With 91% of teens who are on social media posting photos of themselves, parents should discuss what is appropriate to post online and via text message and what is not.
- Parents and teenagers should immediately report any suspicious messages or contact, especially from a stranger.

Drug Abuse:



According to a 2012 National Institute on Drug Abuse survey, 22.9% of 12th graders used marijuana in the last month

Suggested Tips:

- Parents and other adults should watch out for changes in behavior; appearance; habits; health; school performance.
- Parents must talk with their teenagers; teens who learn about drug risks from their parents are 50% less likely to use.
- If you believe your teenager may be using drugs, call your doctor, a substance abuse counselor or mental health professional.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT:**

- www.missingkids.com
- www.netsmartz.org
- theantidrug.com
- www.timetotalk.org



**United States Attorney
William J. Hochul, Jr.
Western District of New York**

A Message to Parents & Teens:

Electronic Communication:



According to the Pew Research Internet Project, 95% of all teens use the internet; 78% have cell phones; and 81% use social networking sites

Suggested Tips:

- Do not give out personal information online such as your address/phone number.
- Username /password belong to you, only you.
- The Internet has a great memory, so keep its memory of you clean with appropriate pictures.
- Do not meet anyone in person that you met online.
- Parents are ultimately responsible for minors online. Know what your child is doing.

Drug Abuse:



According to a National Institute on Drug Abuse survey, 36.4% of 12th graders used marijuana in the last year; prescription drugs are the second most abused drug

Suggested Tips:

- Don't think your child is immune; prescription pills and other drugs are more readily available than ever.
- Keep prescription drugs out of reach.
- Talk with your teenagers about the dangers of drugs and prescription pills.
- Watch out for changing behavior and if you believe your teenager may be using drugs, get help for your child and yourself.

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DRUG GUIDE FOR PARENTS: LEARN THE FACTS TO KEEP YOUR TEEN SAFE

THE PARTNERSHIP
AT DRUGFREE.ORG

													
	Alcohol	Cocaine/Crack	Cough Medicine/DXM	Ecstasy/MDMA	Heroin	Inhalants	Marijuana	Methamphetamine	Prescription Pain Relievers	Prescription Sedatives and/or Tranquilizers	Prescription Stimulants	Steroids	Tobacco
Street Names / Commercial	Booze	Big C, Blow, Bump, Coke, Nose Candy, Rock, Snow	Dex, Red Devils, Robo, Triple C, Tussin, Skittles, Syrup	Adam, Bean, E, Roll, X, XTC	Big H, Black Tar, Dope, Junk, Skunk, Smack	Whippets, Bagging, Huffing, Poppers, Snappers, Dusting	Blunt, Boom, Dope, Grass, Hash, Herb, Mary Jane, Pot, Reefer, Skunk, Weed	Ice, Chalk, Crank, Crystal, Fire, Glass, Meth, Speed	Codeine, OxyContin (Oxy, O.C.), Percocet (Percs), Vicodin (Vike, Vitamin V)	Mebaral, Quaaludes, Xanax, Valium	Adderall, Dexedrine, Ritalin	Juice, Rhoids, Stackers, Pumpers, Gym Candy	Cancer Sticks, Chew, Cigarettes, Dip, Fags, Smokes
Looks Like	Liquid (types include beer, wine, liquor)	White crystalline powder, chips, chunks or white rocks	Liquid, pills, powder, gel caps	Branded tablets (Playboy bunnies, Nike swoosh)	White to dark brown powder or tar-like substance	Paint thinners, glues, nail polish remover, whipped cream aerosol, air conditioner fluid (Freon) and more	A green or gray mixture of dried, shredded flowers and leaves of the hemp plant	White or slightly yellow crystal-like powder, large rock-like chunks	Tablets and capsules	Multi-colored tablets and capsules; some can be in liquid form	Tablets and capsules	Tablet, liquid or skin application	Brown, cut up leaves
How It's Used/Abused	Alcohol is drunk	Cocaine can be snorted or injected; crack can be smoked	Swallowed	Swallowed	Injected, smoked, freebased or snorted	Inhaled through nose or mouth	Smoked, brewed into tea or mixed into foods	Swallowed, injected, snorted or smoked	Swallowed or injected	Swallowed or injected	Swallowed, injected or snorted	Swallowed, applied to skin or injected	Smoked or chewed
What Teens Have Heard	Makes a boring night fun	Keeps you amped up; you'll be the life of the party	Causes a trippy high with various plateaus	Enhances the senses and you'll love everyone	Full-on euphoria, but super risky	A cheap, 20-minute high	Relaxing, not dangerous and often easier to get than alcohol	Can keep you going for days	A free high, straight from the medicine cabinet	A great release of tension	Keeps you attentive and focused	Will guarantee a spot on the starting lineup	An oral fixation and appetite suppressant
Dangerous Because	Impairs reasoning, clouds judgement. Long-term heavy drinking can lead to alcoholism and liver and heart disease	Can cause heart attacks, strokes and seizures. In rare cases, sudden death on the first use	Can cause abdominal pain, extreme nausea, liver damage	Can cause severe dehydration, liver and heart failure and even death	Chronic heroin users risk death by overdose	Chronic exposure can produce significant damage to the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. Can induce death	Can cause memory and learning problems, hallucinations, delusions and depersonalization	Chronic long-term use, or high dosages, can cause psychotic behavior (including paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, violent behavior, insomnia and strokes)	A large single dose can cause severe respiratory depression that can lead to death	Slows down the brain's activity and when a user stops taking them, there can be a rebound effect, possibly leading to seizures and other harmful consequences	Taking high doses may result in dangerously high body temperatures and an irregular heartbeat. Potential for heart attacks or lethal seizures	Boys can develop breasts, girls can develop facial hair and a deepened voice. Can cause heart attacks and strokes	Cigarette smoking harms every organ in the body and causes coronary heart disease, and stroke, as well as many forms of cancer
Teen Usage (Grades 9-12)	1 in 2 teens drank alcohol in the last year	1 in 9 teens has abused cocaine or crack in their lifetime	1 in 8 teens has abused cough medicine in their lifetime	1 in 8 teens has abused Ecstasy in their lifetime	1 in 20 teens has abused heroin in their lifetime	1 in 6 teens has abused inhalants in their lifetime	1 in 3 teens has abused marijuana in their lifetime	1 in 14 teens has abused methamphetamine in their lifetime	1 in 5 teens has abused prescription pain relievers in their lifetime	1 in 11 12th graders has abused sedatives and/or tranquilizers in their lifetime	1 in 10 teens has abused Ritalin or Adderall in their lifetime	1 in 20 teens has abused steroids in their lifetime	1 in 4 teens smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days
Signs of Abuse	Slurred speech, lack of coordination, nausea, vomiting, hangovers	Nervous behavior, restlessness, bloody noses, high energy	Slurred speech, loss of coordination, disorientation, vomiting	Teeth clenching, chills, sweating, dehydration, anxiety, unusual displays of affection	Track marks on arms, slowed and slurred speech, vomiting	Missing household products, a drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance	Slowed thinking and reaction time, impaired coordination, paranoia	Nervous physical activity, scabs and open sores, decreased appetite, inability to sleep	Medicine bottles present without illness, Rx bottles missing, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns	Slurred speech, shallow breathing, sluggishness, disorientation, lack of coordination	Lack of appetite, increased alertness, attention span and energy	Rapid growth of muscles, opposite sex characteristics and extreme irritability	Smell on clothes and hair, yellowing of teeth and fingers that hold cigarettes
Important to Know	Being a child of an alcoholic places children at greater risk for developing alcohol problems	Cocaine is one of the most powerfully addictive drugs	The "high" from cough medicine is caused by ingesting a large amount of dextromethorphan (DXM), a common active ingredient	Can be addictive. A popular club drug because of its stimulant properties which allow users to dance for long periods of time	Heroin overdose is a particular risk on the street, where the purity of the drug cannot be accurately known	More than 1000 common products are potential inhalants that can kill on the first use or any time thereafter	Contrary to popular belief, marijuana can be addictive	Meth has a high potential for abuse and addiction, putting children at risk, increasing crime and causing environmental harm	Abusing prescription painkillers is just as dangerous, addictive and deadly as using heroin	Using prescription sedatives and tranquilizers with alcohol can slow both the heart and respiration and possibly lead to death	Many teens abuse this prescribed medication to help them cram for exams or suppress their appetite	Teens who abuse steroids before the typical adolescent growth spurt risk staying short and never reaching their full adult height	Secondhand smoke contributes to more than 35,000 deaths related to cardiovascular disease

Thanks to Endo Pharmaceuticals, National Supporter, Parent Resources | Find more tools and tips at www.timetotalk.org.

Sources: Partnership Attitude Tracking Study 2009, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. © 2010 The Partnership at Drugfree.org