

## **Keep the Holidays Merry – Move Your Medications**

The AWAR<sub>x</sub>E<sup>®</sup> Consumer Protection Program encourages consumers to move medications from their medicine cabinets into a secure area for the holidays to protect loved ones. It is not uncommon when guests visit that pain pills, stimulants, and tranquilizers are removed from medicine cabinets to support prescription drug abuse habits. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, more than 50% of prescription drug abusers got them from family and friends for free. And sadly, prescription drugs are the most commonly abused drugs among 12 to 13 year olds.

Young teenagers do not realize that prescription drugs, when not taken according to a doctor's directions, can be deadly. Some teenagers secure pills from unsuspecting friends, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, sisters, and brothers, and go to a Pharm Party or a Skittles Party where all those who attend throw various pills into a bowl. Then each teen grabs some pills and ingests them. The pills they take could be anything from Ritalin<sup>®</sup>, to Tylenol<sup>®</sup> with Codeine, to Vicodin<sup>®</sup>, to Xanax<sup>®</sup>. Sometimes teens mix the pills with alcohol. Taking such combinations could lead to serious injury and even death. In addition, teens and others who experiment with using prescription drugs to "get high," risk becoming addicted to medications such as opioid painkillers. Regrettably, more and more people addicted to these prescription pain pills are then turning to heroin use, with both addictions placing these people at risk for overdose and death.

Keep your loved ones safe from themselves. Lock your medicine out of sight in a secure place other than a drawer or cabinet, as these are the first places a determined person will look.

AWAR<sub>x</sub>E promotes prescription drug safety awareness and focuses on four areas: misuse and abuse prevention, the risks of buying medications online, the dangers of counterfeit drugs, and proper drug disposal. For more information about disposal of unwanted medications in your area, visit the Get Local page for your state at [www.AWARERX.ORG](http://www.AWARERX.ORG).

*The AWAR<sub>x</sub>E Consumer Protection Program is brought to you by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy Foundation<sup>®</sup>. For more information, please visit [www.AWARERX.ORG](http://www.AWARERX.ORG). NABP is an impartial professional organization that supports the state boards of pharmacy in creating uniform regulations to protect public health.*