

## Youth Use of Sleeping Pills

According to research from a managed-care company, use of prescription sleeping pills by people under age 20 rose 85% between 2000 and 2004. During this same period, use of prescription sleep medications by adults doubled.

Medco Health Solutions made the estimate by examining its own prescription-drug data. Fifteen percent of the prescriptions were for young patients who also received medication for attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder. The FDA has not approved any use of sleep medications for children under the age of 18.

Older patients were more likely to take sleeping pills than younger ones, and females were twice as likely to get the drugs as males. Younger adults and children are starting to use these medications with even greater frequency.

(Source: Join Together, 10-20-05)



## SNOWMAN SHIRTS

A rapper, Young Jeezy, is marketing a popular t-shirt featuring a stern-looking snowman. However, there is possibly more than seasonal whimsy in the image. Young Jeezy sings a song, "Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 101". In that song, the lyrics include cocaine references and the lyrics: "Jeezy the Snowman/I'm iced out, plus I got that snow, man."

Anti-drug activists are worried that parents may not have any idea about the symbolism behind the snowman shirts. The company that produces the shirts, Miskeen Originals of New Jersey, is aware of the drug message. The company owner said he didn't know the meaning until the artist explained it to him: it's a drug dealer, the man delivering the snow. The owner says, "Now everyone is selling the snowman, all unlicensed. It's become a street-hood hit worldwide."



The director of the Institute for Prevention Research at Cornell University Medical College says, "The research tells us that influences coming from the media can have profound effects on kids and influence them to use drugs. All of these things help to convey the impression that engaging in these behaviors using drugs is normal and that drugs might help you be successful or sexy or something."

(Source: Pride Omaha, November/December 2005)

## Marijuana Can Hurt Academic Success

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is calling on parents to place a new emphasis on keeping young people drug free. Studies indicate that marijuana use during peak academic years can have a significant negative impact on academic performance.

Key finding of the studies reported by the ONDCP are:

- Marijuana can hinder a teen's ability to learn
- Heavy marijuana use impairs young people's ability to concentrate and retain information
- Marijuana use is linked to poorer grades (A teen with a "D" average is four times more likely to have used marijuana than a teen with an "A" average)
- Marijuana and alcohol use are linked to higher dropout rates (A teenage marijuana user's odds of dropping out are more than twice that of a non-user)
- Teens who begin marijuana use at an early age when the brain is still developing may be more vulnerable to neuropsychological deficits, especially verbal abilities.

For more information, please go to [www.mediacampaign.org](http://www.mediacampaign.org). For free anti-drug resources including brochures, posters, and videos, please go to [www.theantidrug.com/news/get-resources.aspx?from=home](http://www.theantidrug.com/news/get-resources.aspx?from=home).

(Source: Pride Omaha, Inc., November/December 2005)

## Sports And Alcohol: QUICK FACTS

- One study found that alcohol was involved in 20% of skiing accidents, yet Amstel Light is a sponsor of ski resorts and of the US Freeskiing Tour.
- Alcohol producers spent \$991 million on television advertising in 2002...60% of it on sports programming. Ninety-three percent of youth ages eight to 17 followed sports, mainly on television.
- Seventy-two percent of Americans say that showing beer ads on sporting events is inconsistent with the positive role of sports for children.
- College students who were sports fans were more likely to engage in binge drinking than their non-fan peers.
- Seventy-one percent of adults support a ban on alcohol ads during televised college sports. Former University of North Carolina head basketball coach Dean Smith and former University of Nebraska head football coach and current U.S. Representative Tom Osborne (R-NE) support such a ban.

(Source: The Marin Institute, Winter 2006)

## Drinking Moms



Women who drink regularly and are depressed are more likely to have teenagers with drinking problems. Researchers from Australia followed youths from childhood through adulthood and found that if “their mothers were depressed and drank regularly when their children were adolescents these children had in-

creased risk to develop alcohol disorders. Also, if the children had early signs of aggression and delinquency, they were also at greatest risk of developing alcohol disorders in early adulthood.”

The research also noted that while the children of drinking and depressed mothers began exhibiting signs of alcohol problems around age 14, they didn’t develop an alcohol disorder until around age 21...providing a window of opportunity of interventions.

(Source: Join Together, 12-1-05)

### **Mark Your Calendars! SCIP and SAP Conference “Nebraska Youth: Understanding the Risks in their World”**

Date: March 31, 2006, 8:00am - 3:30pm

Location : Kearney, NE

Fee: \$25.00

See brochure for details and registration form

## Eye Test For Fetal Alcohol Disorder

A test that relies on eye movement could help doctors identify children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Currently, no diagnostic tests exist to distinguish FASD from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), but researchers at the Queen’s University in Ontario said a study involving 25 children found that those with FASD had distinct brain abnormalities that could be detected with an eye-



movement test. Not only could tests begin to identify specific deficits in children, but the objective test would help physicians overcome cultural and language barriers to diagnosis.

(Source: Join Together, 11-29-05)

## SUBSTANCE-FREE DORMS

Parents, school administrators, and students are among the fans of substance-free dorms, which ban the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Such dorms are now available at dozens of colleges nationally. Even though students under 21 are not legally allowed to drink, this law is widely flouted. Researchers say that students in drug-free dorms are less likely to binge drink than their peers, and less apt to suffer drinking-related problems like poor grades, encounters with police, or accepting rides with drunk drivers.

Even some students who drink like the idea of drug-free dorms. It can often be parent-driven, but some students who drink socially don’t want to live in a climate where there’s a lot of drunkenness around them. It is often the best way to avoid the secondhand effects of drinking, like having studying interrupted or having property vandalized.

Some schools have taken the concept a step further, offering “recovery” dorms for students previously treated for addiction. A student from Earlham College says, “I was in residential treatment for part of my time in high school. When I got to college, I didn’t want to have to worry about having all that stuff in my face. I’ve been in wellness housing my whole time here. I could handle normal housing now, but I like the people I live with and there’s a very good atmosphere.”

Freshman tend to find the drug-free dorms the most appealing. Schools like the dorms not only because of the message they send but because they suffer about half the property damage than “wet” dorms.

(Source: Join Together, 11-10-05)