



Media Release

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PARTNERSHIP RAISES AWARENESS ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AMONG CHILDREN

LITTLE ROCK – On Friday, March 12, 2010, the Office of the Drug Director unveiled its “Monitor, Secure, Dispose” campaign against prescription drug abuse in Arkansas.

Attorney General Dustin McDaniel, Drug Director Fran Flener, Benton Police Chief Kirk Lane, and Jennifer Bryan spoke to a crowd in the Capitol Rotunda about the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and some simple steps everyone can take to address this growing problem.

“It’s crucial that we take preventative measures,” said Flener. “We need to treat our medications as we would fine jewelry or a loaded gun. There are so many things parents can do to prevent their kids from having these problems, starting with controlling their own medications. The most important resource a child has in deciding to be drug-free is his or her parents.”

“It is important to remember that prescription drugs are a threat to all teens,” said McDaniel. “The problem cuts across all racial and socioeconomic lines, and affects girls as much, if not more than boys. We owe it to the children in our lives to begin to understand the problem so that we can begin to fix the problem,”

The “Monitor, Secure, Dispose” message is a simple way to educate Arkansans about this growing problem and its dangers. Participation is easy.

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First, monitor your medications. Take note of how many pills are in each bottle or packet and keep track of your refills. Second, secure your medications – both prescription and over the counter. Keep them in a safe place where youth can't access them. Lock them away if necessary. Encourage other adults to secure their medications as well. Third, dispose of unneeded, unused, and outdated medications.

In early February, a consortium of law enforcement agencies in Saline County held "Operation Medicine Cabinet." Through this one-day event they were able to collect more than 50,000 prescription pills.

"Our success in Saline County can be replicated across the state," said Lane. "This problem is prevalent in local school hallways, and legal prescription drugs are far too easy to obtain. People – especially teenagers – are stealing legitimately prescribed medications from their parents' medicine cabinets or getting them from friends at school. The results are often deadly."

"Monitor, Secure, Dispose" is made possible by a coalition including the Office of the Drug Director, the Office of the Attorney General, members of law enforcement, educators, members of the health care field, and state agencies. For additional information and resources to combat prescription drug abuse in Arkansas, please go to the Attorney General's Web site at www.ArkansasAG.gov or I Owe It To Me at www.ioit2me.com.