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## **US Attorney's Office Announces "The Right Prescription for New Jersey"** *Federal, State agencies and Non-Profits Come Together to Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse*

NEWARK, N.J. -- The United States Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey, today launched the Right Prescription for New Jersey prescription drug abuse prevention initiative, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

The initiative is a collaboration of federal, state, and non-profit organizations and agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New Jersey Division, Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, N.J. Division of Consumer Affairs, N.J. Jersey Department of Education, N.J. State Commission of Investigation, N.J. Parent Teacher Association, N.J. Prevention Network, and the N.J. Broadcasters Association.

The centerpiece of the initiative is a multi-media public service campaign designed to get the message out to New Jersey parents about the dangers of prescription drug abuse and steps they can take to protect their family. The *Virtual Backpack* is the connection to on-line resources that contain all multi-media pieces supporting this program. The initiative challenges New Jersey residents to take the Five-Step American Medicine Chest Challenge:

1. Take inventory of your prescription and over-the-counter medicine.
2. Secure your medicine chest.
3. Dispose of your unused, unwanted, and expired medicine.
4. Take your medicine(s) exactly as prescribed.
5. Talk to your children about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

"Over the past few years, we have prosecuted 65 people, including five doctors and two pharmacists, for prescription drug trafficking," U.S. Attorney Fishman said. "And we're committed to an aggressive law enforcement approach to this problem. But we will never arrest our way out of this epidemic. And that's why today we're kicking off "The Right Prescription for New Jersey" -- a collaborative, statewide initiative to prevent prescription drug abuse by getting parents to talk to their kids about the dangers of abusing prescription and over-the-counter medications and to safeguard the medications they keep at home."

Brian R. Crowell, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, New Jersey Division, stated, "The DEA is committed to fighting the prescription drug problem with every available tool possible in order to protect our youth and our families. Children and young adults today not only face local drug dealers

peddling diverted pain pills on street corners, our unprepared loved ones can be supplied by their best friends at school, unsecured medicine cabinets in our households, and even some medical professionals who choose to traffic pills for profit. Opiate abuse is extremely dangerous and has destroyed families in our cities, our suburbs, and our rural communities. The Right Prescription for New Jersey will serve as an invaluable avenue for all citizens to protect themselves and their loved ones through education, preparation and awareness.”

Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner State of New Jersey Department of Education, “Prescription drug abuse is not a new problem, but it is one that deserves renewed attention. We have reached out to every school district in the state during the past week to build awareness for the campaign and make sure our children stay healthy and ready to learn.”

“With the Right Prescription for New Jersey and the 5-Step American Medicine Chest Challenge we are calling on residents to see their medicine cabinets through new eyes -- as an access point for potential misuse and abuse of over-the-counter and prescription medicine by young people. Our hope is that this initiative, by raising awareness about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs and reducing the availability of potent drugs that lead kids down a path to addiction, will help stem the tide of the epidemic of prescription drug abuse that is claiming 40 American lives a day,” explained Angelo M. Valente, executive director of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey.

A video testimonial by Meg Dupont-Parisi, an Ocean County mother who lost her son to a prescription drug addiction in 2011, is a central part of the campaign, and a reminder of why it is so important to take steps to protect your family.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently labeled prescription drug abuse an epidemic, reporting that the death toll from overdoses of prescription painkillers has more than tripled in the past decade. More than 40 people die every day from overdoses involving narcotic pain relievers. According to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, 70 percent of people who abuse prescription pain relievers obtained them from friends or relatives, and there has been a 400% increase in substance abuse treatment admissions for people abusing prescription drugs.

All of the Right Prescription for New Jersey campaign prevention materials and resources are available for download and use on the [AmericanMedicineChest.Com](http://AmericanMedicineChest.Com) website.