

Tips and Alerts

Oneida County Prevention Council Bulletin

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Prescription Errors Education and Awareness Week

October 24 through 31 is designated as Prescription Errors Education and Awareness Week. Over 107,000 Americans are incorrectly taking their prescription drugs at any given time, and as a result, a week labeled as such is important.

When an individual is severely injured, or undergoes surgery, they are often prescribed Opioids such as Hydrocodone or Oxycodone to help manage the pain. Once these medications are prescribed, users should take caution to the unintended, yet possible, adverse effects. Side effects may include nausea/vomiting, constipation, drowsiness and even confusion. Sadly, the most common side effect is addiction. Due to the fact that these medications numb pain so effectively and can induce a high, the medications all too often become a part of everyday habit in order to function normally. After a while, tolerance to medication is built up and a person continuously needs more medication to function normally and to achieve a high. To get the amount of medication needed, patients often visit multiple doctors or buy prescription drugs on the streets, which can be costly and life threatening. However, once Opioids are no longer affordable, users may then turn to Heroin as a cheaper, yet riskier alternative.

Opioids are the most misused prescription drug, but not the only one. Other prescription drugs that are often abused include central nervous system depressants such as Xanax, Valium, Ativan and Klonopin, all of which can be used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders. It is important to know that you should consult a doctor if you are not sure if you are correctly using your medication. It is also crucial that any unused medications are properly disposed of. Coalitions around the country, including Oneida County's Communities that Care Coalition, participate in two Prescription Drug Take Back Days in September and April. Also in Oneida County, **Utica and Rome Police Departments have RXMedReturn units available 24/7 for safe disposal of all medications.**

Did you know?

1. If you find that you experience severe side effects from a new medication, be sure to seek medical attention immediately, and alert your primary care doctor ASAP.
2. The use and misuse of prescription drugs, especially Opioids, is also a contributing factor to the rise of Heroin use.
3. Ingesting too much, or using a prescription that is meant for someone else, is prescription drug misuse.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved with Oneida County Communities that Care Coalition, or if you have any questions, please contact Judith H. Reilly, Community Programs Director, at jreilly@cflrinc.org.