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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Office of Substance Abuse Prevention Launches *A Dose of Reality***

**To Raise Awareness of the Risks of Prescription Painkiller Abuse Amongst Teens**

*One in 11 New Mexico Teens Abuse Prescription Drugs*

**SANTA FE, N.M. -** Every day, almost 2,500 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 will abuse prescription drugs for the first time. In New Mexico, nearly one in an 11 high school students report having abused prescription painkillers and ranks 3rd highest in the nation for teen non-medical use of pain relievers at 6.8 percent, compared to 5.0 percent.

Governor Susana Martinez announced in December that New Mexico’s drug overdose fatality rate decreased by 16 percent between 2011 and 2013. The overdose fatality rate decreased from first in the nation in 2009 to third in 2012, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As a state, New Mexico has made great strides in reducing prescription drug abuse.

To further combat the problem of prescription drug abuse and to build on the progress currently being made in the state, the Human Services Department (HSD) New Mexico Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP) announced today the launch of *A Dose of Reality*, a statewide prevention campaign to educate teens and their parents about the serious risks for addiction and overdose from prescription painkiller abuse.

The campaign includes three commercials aimed at teens, advertisements in pharmaceutical prescription drug bags that promote safe storage and proper disposal, and a parent resource toolkit. The campaign is being funded by a grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP).

“Many kids mistakenly believe prescription drugs are safer to abuse than illegal street drugs and we need to dispel the myths associated with abusing prescription painkillers,” said Wayne Lindstrom, Director of the HSD Behavioral Health Services Division. “In reality, 12 to 17 year olds abuse prescription drugs more than they abuse heroin, cocaine/crack, ecstasy, and methamphetamine combined. Prescription drugs most commonly abused by teens are prescription painkillers. We need to educate teens and their parents of the risks to avoid misuse in the first place.”

In New Mexico, teen prescription drug abuse is exceeded only by marijuana use. Two-thirds of teens who abuse pain medicine report getting it from family members or friends, often by simply opening a medicine cabinet. In many cases, parents can cut the home supply simply by safely storing and properly disposing of any unused pills.

OSAP will also collaborate with a network of community prevention coalitions to educate local communities.

For more information on statewide and county specific data and to view the advertisement videos, please visit [www.nmprevention.org](http://www.nmprevention.org)

**About The Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP)** *OSAP is an office of the Behavioral Health Services Division within the New Mexico Human Services Department and seeks to build community-based capacity of the state’s local prevention providers to deliver effective prevention services aimed at reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse.*

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