
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOTE: Attached is an overview flyer that can be linked to for more Summit details.

Reality of abuse will break your heart

By Karen Kelly

We are losing friends, neighbors and family members to prescription drug abuse at an alarming rate – one person every 19 minutes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There isn't a family in America immune from the impact of this epidemic. Those fortunate enough to escape the personal toll of prescription drug abuse first-hand are, instead, forced to bear the burden of increased costs for health care, treatment, government services, workplace safety and law enforcement.

It is estimated that *at least* 3 out of every 4 child abuse or neglect cases across the country involve substance abuse by parents or caregivers. Does this break your heart? It does mine. Especially since we have it within our abilities to do something to lower the numbers.

But how can this be accomplished?

Engaging families, educating youth and raising the consciousness of concerned communities – such as the campaigns undertaken by the NOPE Task Force – is a valuable and effective strategy. Individual efforts are making an impact, but there is greater strength through a comprehensive, coordinated and all-inclusive approach.

On April 10-12, the first National Rx Drug Abuse Summit will be held in Orlando to foster better understanding and cooperation between all stakeholders and learn how cooperation can lead to successful outcomes. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn from community advocates, medical professionals, treatment experts, educators, private industry, state and national leaders and law enforcement officials.

Keynote presentations will be made by Dr. Nora D. Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse; R. Gil Kerlikowske, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina M. Benjamin; and Joseph T. Rannazzisi, deputy assistant administrator for the DEA's Office of Diversion Control.

Summit sessions are divided into five educational tracks – health care, advocacy and prevention, human resources, treatment and law enforcement – tailored to provide timely and relevant information. Programs include more than 40 breakout sessions, five moderated panel discussions and “select sessions” providing in-depth examination of innovative programs and strategies.

Our youth are experimenting with prescription drugs at an earlier age and in higher percentages than illicit drugs. Overdose death rates are escalating in proportion to the growing level of narcotic abuse. It's time to take a more proactive, unified approach.

Karen Kelly is president/CEO of Operation UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education) serving southern and eastern Kentucky.

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For more information about the Summit call 1-866-678-6483, visit www.NationalRxDrugAbuseSummit.org, or follow news about the event on Twitter using **@RxSummit**. To learn more about becoming a sponsor or exhibitor contact **Sarah Centimole** at scentimole@centertech.com.

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