

Heroin:

The Silent Epidemic

It's been all over the local news. There has been a dramatic increase in teenagers and young adults using heroin, especially in Bergen County. **According to *The Record*, in 2013, there were 27 fatal overdoses. As of April 1, 2014, there were 14 fatal overdoses.** The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources provided these tips to help keep your family safe:

1. **Be informed.** Often, the gateway to heroin use is prescription painkillers. Kids get them from a doctor to treat a sports injury or simply take them from their parents' medicine cabinet. Start talking to your children when they are in middle school about how easy it is to become addicted to these drugs.

2. **Clear out your medicine cabinet.** Be sure to get rid of unused or expired prescription drugs at the next drug take back event in your town or drop them off at a permanent drop box located in the following police departments in Bergen County:

Leonia, Palisades Park, Paramus, Park Ridge, Ridgefield, River Vale, Township of Washington and Waldwick.

3. **Be on alert.** Consider how medications can be obtained and lock up those medications that



you are taking. Many young people start taking medicine they find at home or the home of a friend or relative.

4. **Know when it's time to reach out for assistance and support.** Educate yourself about the signs of drug abuse. They include changes in mood, appetite or sleep patterns, sudden weight loss or weight gain, decline in personal grooming, slurred speech, skipping school or unusually low grades, money and valuables missing from your home. You know your child best. If you suspect something is going on with your child, chances are it is.

If you have questions or your parental "antennae" is up, please call The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources at 201-261-2800. We can help answer your questions in complete confidence and connect you to other resources.

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources

Where you turn for information, expertise and support in understanding and preventing alcohol and drug abuse.

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