

The National Association of State Controlled Substances Authorities

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NASCSA Resolution 2008- 06
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Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER PARTIES REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF NONMEDICAL USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

WHEREAS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and its predecessor Household Survey have, for many years, included, in their definition of nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances the use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber to the user, as well as use of the controlled substance for the feeling it produces;

WHEREAS, at the 2008 National Association of State Controlled Substances Authorities (NASCSA) Annual Educational Conference, a presenter indicated that SAMHSA is considering the possibility of removing from the definition of nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances the use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber to the survey respondent;

WHEREAS, the theory described for such removal was that some of these persons might be self medicating for pain by use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber, by obtaining the drug from a friend or relative.

WHEREAS, the 2007 NSDUH reports identifies the sources where pain relievers were obtained for the most recent nonmedical use among past year users, aged 12 or older, was 56% from a friend or relative for free and 14% bought or took from a friend or relative.

WHEREAS, removal of the use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber from the definition of nonmedical use of a Controlled Substance could mean that a very large proportion of the above parties (70% of the whole) might be removed from the data collected by NSDUH on nonmedical use, making the problem of nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances appear to be far smaller than it really is;

WHEREAS, the possible change in definition described above would prevent comparisons of future survey results with prior years' survey results regarding the nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances.

WHEREAS, controlled substances are dangerous if not used under medical supervision; the drugs have the potential for abuse, dependence and addiction, as well as other adverse events including medical complications, overdoses, injuries and deaths;

WHEREAS, the use of a controlled substance without medical supervision, even on an experimental basis, can lead to much more serious abuse and dependence;

WHEREAS, the use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber is illegal in all 50 states and nationally, under the Federal Controlled Substances Act;

WHEREAS, protecting the public health and safety of the citizens in NASCSA member states requires accurate information on the extent of nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NASCSA directs the Executive Committee to send a letter to SAMHSA requesting that they do not modify the NSDUH definition of nonmedical use of prescription controlled substances by removing the use of a controlled substance without a prescription issued by a prescriber to the survey respondent. Instead, NASCSA requests that SAMHSA consider gathering additional information of the subgroup of persons who use controlled substances without a prescription issued to them by a prescriber, such as asking follow up questions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NASCSA directs its Executive Committee to send copies of this letter to the administrators of the FDA, DEA, and BJA and to appropriate Congressional committee chairs, subcommittee chairs, and appropriate individual members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NASCSA offer to provide information to and to hold discussions with SAMHSA regarding this issue.



ATTEST: _____
President

Date: 10-28-2008