



Partnership[™] for Drug-Free Kids

Where families find answers

February 12, 2016

Chairman Claire Ayer
Vermont Senate Health and Welfare Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Chairman Ayer:

On behalf of the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, a national non-profit dedicated to reducing substance abuse among adolescents by supporting families and engaging with teens, I am writing to express support for Senate Bill 243. We would also encourage you to consider including language to require insurers to provide necessary access to abuse deterrent opioids. Having a greater share of the controlled substances in America's medicine cabinets formulated with abuse deterrent properties is an important step forward to curbing prescription drug abuse while ensuring that these medicines remain available to those who need them for a legitimate medical purpose under a physician's care.

The consequences of medicine abuse, including emergency room visits, treatment admissions and overdose deaths are staggering and it is a behavior starting in adolescence. The Partnership's research shows that one in four teens reports having misused or abused a prescription drug in their lifetime. And nearly two-thirds of American teens who have abused pain relievers say that they get them from family members and friends. Due to the increase in prescription drug abuse, drug overdoses now exceed car crashes as the number one cause of accidental deaths in the United States.

These statistics represent families whose lives have been impacted by the misuse and abuse of prescription medicine. Many have suffered the ultimate tragedy, the loss of a daughter or son. While advancements like abuse deterrent formulations are not the only solution to solving the nation's prescription drug abuse problem, it is one common-sense approach to potentially help another family from losing a child to addiction. Insurance coverage for these products will not only lead to a larger share of abuse deterrent medications in medicine cabinets, but will also encourage companies to continue to innovate in this direction.

We applaud you for your leadership on this issue and hope you will consider amending the bill to include a provision to address abuse deterrent formulations.

Sincerely,

Marcia Lee Taylor
President and CEO

Cc: Sen. Virginia "Ginny" Lyons, Vice Chair
Sen. Anthony Pollina
Sen. Dick McCormack
Sen. Brian Collamore, Clerk