

Release of Troubling Data Marks National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week

For Immediate Release - Alexandria, VA

Justin Cohen
Director of Public Relations
800-548-0497 x116

NAADAC-The Association for Addiction Professionals welcomes the increased awareness of addictive disorders associated with the use of inhalants, as part of National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week, March 21-27. NAADAC is especially concerned about the surge in adolescent usage-more than 2.6 million youth ages 12-17 have used inhalants, according to SAMHSA.

Inhalants are breathable chemical vapors that produce psychoactive effects. They include glue, cleaning fluids, and spray paints?cheap and legal products, easily accessible to youth. Inhalants cause irreparable damage to the brain and death, yet are often overlooked when communities and schools design drug programs.

"Communities can effectively address the troubling rise in adolescent inhalants usage by engaging addiction professionals, who can provide expertise in prevention, intervention, and treatment," explained NAADAC Executive Director Pat Ford Roegner. "Addictive disorders are highly treatable, but a comprehensive system of professional care needs to be available."

"Even more so than with other addictive substances, inhalants usage tends to be underreported and its dangers too easily dismissed. But the data point to an alarming need to bolster education and treatment options," added Ford-Roegner. "Young people who use inhalants are much more likely to gravitate to other illicit drugs, so it's doubly important that they receive immediate care from an addiction professional."

Inhalants is the only category of drugs in which, among adolescents, usage rates are rising and perception of health risk is decreasing, according to new data from NIDA's Monitoring the Future Survey, Partnership for a Drug-Free America's Partnership Attitude Tracking Study and SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health. It's also the only category that usage is greater among 8th graders than 10th or 12th graders. At 15.7, the mean age of those who use inhalants is younger than for any other substance. Youths who use inhalants are more than three times as likely to use other drugs.

Government experts warn that inhalants are a commonly undetected factor in adolescent deaths listed as accidents or suicides. Anecdotal evidence suggests that young people who suffer from addictive disorders use inhalants because they don't show up in many types of drug tests.

NAADAC recently stepped up its efforts on adolescent addiction issues, including organizing a committee of adolescent treatment experts and producing an issue brief on the role of addiction professionals in schools.