



D.A.R.E.[®]



October 13, 2016

The Hon. Michael A. Botticelli
Executive Office of the President
Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Botticelli:

As you know, abuse of prescription drugs and opioids is a rising epidemic in the United States, threatening all too many of our communities. Twenty-four percent of high school students are abusing prescription medication, and prescription drugs are the most commonly abused substances among 12 and 13-year-olds. We have seen that, too often, prescription drug abuse starts in the home, with children and others accessing pain and other medications without authorization. Indeed, 62% of teens say they abuse prescription drugs because they are easy to get from their parent's medicine cabinets.

In hospitals and other clinical settings, access to controlled substances is strictly regulated. However, these same medications, many of which are just as addictive as heroin, are dispensed to patients – often by federal agencies, such as the Veterans Administration, Department of Defense, and Indian Health Service -- and sent home in containers that by specification a six-year-old can readily open.

In 2013, the FDA identified that improved security for packaging and storage was a priority for its task force on Opioids (<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/InformationbyDrugClass/ucm337852.htm>) and stated: "FDA is also interested in exploring whether innovative package/storage designs... can prevent or deter misuse and abuse..."

In 2015, the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the top public health school in the country, published "The Prescription Opioid Epidemic: An Evidence Based Approach", which also identified the need to evaluate more secure packaging standards to prevent abuse and diversion and devoted an entire section to this important topic, stating "One component of a comprehensive approach to the problem is to... inform the development of innovative packaging... that can reduce nonmedical use and diversion." See: <http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-drug-safety-and-effectiveness/opioid-epidemic-town-hall-2015/2015-prescription-opioid-epidemic-report.pdf>

Fortunately, promising new secure packaging technology has been developed to address this problem. This includes prescription vials that can be secured with a locking bottle cap, and other anti-tampering measures. By preventing pilfering, the use of these locking prescription vials over a ten-year period could prevent 5 million teens from initiating abuse, and generate savings of up to \$33 billion in direct medical expenditures and up to \$56 billion economy-wide.

The potential benefits of lockable prescription vial use in reducing opioid abuse are so strong that Congress recently authorized funds for States, tribes, and local governments to test utilization of these vials in the recently-enacted Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016.

We respectfully urge you to use your authority as the coordinator of the federal government's drug control activities to encourage the federal agencies that dispense prescription drugs to actively consider dispensing opioids and other addictive drugs in locking prescription vials. This promising technology could prevent thousands of patients and members of their families, including teens, from starting to abuse opioids, stave off resulting addiction for many of them, and save numerous lives.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request, and for your efforts to curtail opioid abuse.

Sincerely,

Bob Bushman, President
National Narcotics Officers'
Associations Coalition

Frank Pegueros, President & CEO
D.A.R.E America

April Rovero, Founder/CEO
National Coalition Against Prescription
Drug Abuse