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Dear Parents and Caregivers:

Our children are the future. You know them as well as anyone. That is why you should know that while teen drug use is down overall, one category is on the rise—the abuse of prescription drugs. More Kalamazoo County middle school students reported using a prescription drug—such as a pain reliever, depressant or stimulant—than marijuana or alcohol according to the Michigan Profile of Healthy Youth Survey conducted in 2010.

Finding prescription drugs can be as easy as opening the family medicine cabinet, a friend's purse, or locker. And since there is no smoke or smell, prescription drug abuse can be hard to detect. What's also disturbing is that many people don't realize that these drugs can be just as dangerous as street drugs when not used as prescribed. So kids that would never try street drugs might feel safe abusing prescription drugs.

Parents have a direct impact on the access to prescription drugs and can take immediate steps to protect their children from the dangers by following a few simple tips.

- **"Secure Your Meds"** at home. Monitor quantities and control access. Ask friends and family members to do the same.
- **Set clear rules** for teens about all drug use, including not sharing medicine and always following the medical provider's advice and dosages.
- **Properly dispose** of old or unneeded medicines.
- **Talk to your children** about the risks of drugs and alcohol and include prescription and over-the-counter medicines in the conversation.

On behalf of local law enforcement officials, we ask you to please follow these steps to help prevent the growing concern of prescription drug abuse in our community. For more information on where you can properly dispose of unused or unwanted medications, visit www.redmedbox.com or call 269-388-4200. Thank you.

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