

16th Annual Crime Prevention Guide

Preventing Prescription Drug Abuse in Island Communities



Pat Binns
Premier



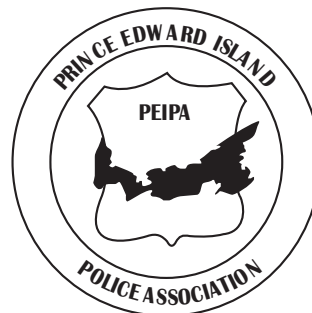
Mildred Dover
Attorney General

*I*t is our pleasure to offer congratulations to the PEI Police Association on the 16th Annual Crime Prevention Guide for Prince Edward Island.

By creating awareness of prescription drug abuse, this guide will provide Islanders with valuable information on this important community issue and its prevention. The guide also provides valuable information to remind us of our role in crime prevention and in keeping our communities safe. We all have a role to play in community safety and crime prevention and by working in partnership with community, government and families we will make a difference.

On behalf of the Government of Prince Edward Island, we wish all Islanders a safe and prosperous year ahead.

executive MEMBERS



Allan Kelly
President



Jason Blacquiere
Recording Secretary



Ron MacLean
Secretary
Treasurer



John Flood
Vice-President East



Milo Murray
Vice-President West



Dale Corish
Director West



Ross Davies
Director East



The Prince Edward Island Police Association is pleased to present the 16th Annual Crime Prevention Guide.

The impacts of abuse of prescription medication have been identified as an increasing concern for many Islanders. This year we are pleased to highlight Prescription Drug Awareness in this guide.

As our population ages so does our need for health care due to diseases, disorders and injuries. Often a necessary component of the treatment for such ailments is medication prescribed by a physician. Some medications can be taken on a daily basis and have no adverse or addictive effects. Other medications, if used over a prolonged period of time can cause some patients to become dependant on them. Many patients believe that they cannot manage without the medication long after their ailment has been corrected. Some people who suffer from drug addiction take prescription drugs such as valium, percacet, dilaudid and oxycodine just for the “high” they receive from the drug not for any specific medical conditions. This behavior often escalates and cascades to an increase in street drug usage.

We hope that the information in the guide will create some awareness and caution around the potential impacts of Prescription Drug Abuse.

On behalf of the members of the Prince Edward Island Police Association I would like to thank the citizens and businesses of the Island for their continued generosity and support of our association.

Yours Sincerely,

Cst. Allan Kelly
President
PEIPA

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On behalf of Fenety Marketing Services, and our partners, the Prince Edward Island Police Association, welcome to our 16th Annual Community Guide, focussing on “Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness.”

I would like to thank the many businesses and citizens in all communities throughout the Province for their strong support of the Prince Edward Island Police Association’s Annual Telephone Appeal. This publication would not be possible without you! We are confident that this Guide will prove to be another valuable resource in our communities.

The opportunity to work with the members of the PEI Police Association on the assembly of this Community Guide is always an honor and privilege. We look forward to your continued support of this unique community project.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Fenety".

Mark Fenety
President
Fenety Marketing Services
1-800-561-4422

“Providing quality, professional marketing and fundraising services on behalf of high-profile, non-profit organizations throughout Atlantic Canada.”



On behalf of City Council and the citizens of Charlottetown I would like to extend congratulations and best wishes to the Prince Edward Island Police Association on the publication of their 16th Annual PEI Crime Prevention Guide.

This year's topic, "Prescription Drug Awareness," is one of great concern and interest to both police and the community as a whole. It is important that citizens of all ages realize prescription medication must be taken under the appropriate circumstances as determined by their physician.

The misuse and abuse of prescription medication has potential short and long term affects on the health and well-being of the individual involved. I am glad to see the police community is working to increase the awareness on this important issue.

I would like to thank all those who play a part in making our City and Province a safe and enjoyable place to live.

Sincerely yours,

Clifford Lee
Mayor
City of Charlottetown



On behalf of the City of Summerside, I wish to offer sincere congratulations to the Prince Edward Island Police Association for producing the 16th Annual Awareness Guide, 2006 edition, which this year focuses upon *Prescription Drug Abuse* within our communities.

You are to be commended for the work which you perform as police officers. Through this guide, along with the many crime prevention programs which members are involved in, both in an official police capacity and on a volunteer basis, you make not only our City, but all communities across Prince Edward Island, a better and safer place in which to live and work.

Once again, please accept our best wishes to everyone involved in the Prince Edward Island Police Association. As well, I take this opportunity of congratulating you on the 16th publication of the Community Awareness Guide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Basil L. Stewart'.

Basil L. Stewart
Mayor
City of Summerside

chief of police's **MESSAGE**



This year marks the sixteenth year for the PEI Police Association Crime Prevention Guide. Each year the Association produces an annual crime prevention/awareness guide, which provides educational materials, information and prompts discussion on important issues facing our communities.

This year the guide focuses on Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness. This is a broad ranging topic dealing with both legal and illicit substances. In the policing environment, we see all too often the effects of drugs use, from increases in criminal activity to the impacts on families.

The foundation of community safety is the community itself, and it relies on the active participation of citizens of all ages. Education and information are key components to making our communities safer. I am sure those reading the guide will find the information to be timely and informative and further hope that the information contained will prompt discussion among family and friends.

The production of this guide not only raises awareness on an important issue, but also assists the Police Association in the efforts to fund and support very worthwhile projects within our Island communities.

On behalf of the members and staff of the Charlottetown Police Department, I would like to congratulate the PEI Police Association for the production of this year's community guide, and wish you every success in the future.

Yours Truly,

A. Paul Smith
Chief of Police
City of Charlottetown

chief of police's **MESSAGE**



It's a real privilege to offer my congratulations to the PEIPA on their 16th Annual Awareness Guide as Acting Chief of Police for Summerside Police Services. This year's guide which focuses on Prescription Drug Awareness couldn't arrive at a more appropriate time. Addiction to prescription drugs is becoming a serious problem within this province. It costs society and individuals thousands of dollars and affects the quality of life of many Islanders.

This year's awareness guide will assist in addressing the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs. Hopefully, it will make us all aware that this is a complex problem that requires a multi-faceted approach. No one group is responsible for the tragedy of drug addiction and no one group working alone will identify the solution. The College of Physicians, the Pharmacy Association, Police and the Government all have a role to play in trying to curb prescription drug abuse.

We are in need of an appropriate prescription monitoring program in this province which would give pharmacists and physicians immediate, online access to a patient's history. This would identify the individuals who are involved in double-doctoring and misusing our Provincial Health Care System.

On behalf of the members and staff of Summerside Police Services I would like to wish the PEIPA much success in this year's Annual Awareness Guide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sinclair G. Walker".

Sinclair G. Walker
A/Chief of Police Services
City of Summerside



we support our
COMMUNITY

CHARLOTTETOWN TIGERS BASKETBALL PROGRAM

The PEIPA sponsors the Charlottetown Tigers Basketball Program for kids in grades 1-9.





we support our
COMMUNITY

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we support our **COMMUNITY**

10TH ANNUAL WINSLOE WEST ROYALTY SOCCER TOURNAMENT
For the past ten years, the PEI Police Association has sponsored the Winsloe West Royalty Soccer Tournament for youths aged 10-18 years. Teams from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island exhibit their talents and sportsmanship in this annual event.



Cst. Allan Kelly, PEIPA President, with the Organizing Committee and players at the 10th Annual WWR Minor Soccer Tournament.



Under 12 Boys 1st Division
2006 Gold - Fundy Strikers



Under 12 Boys Premiere
2006 Gold - Summerside United



Under 12 Boys Premiere
2006 Silver - Charlottetown Abbies



Under 12 Girls 1st Division
2006 Gold - Fundy Strikers



we support our
COMMUNITY

10TH ANNUAL WINSLOE WEST ROYALTY SOCCER TOURNAMENT



Under 12 Girls 1st Division
2006 Silver - Souris Lamplighters



Under 12 Girls Premiere
2006 Silver medalist - Stratford Foxes



Under 12 Girls Premiere
2006 Gold Medalist - Sackville



Under 14 Boys 1st Division
2006 Gold Medalist - Saint John



Under 14 Boys 1st Division
2006 Silver Medalists - Fundy Dairy Queen



Under 14 Boys Premiere
2006 Gold Medalists - Summerside United



we support our
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10TH ANNUAL WINSLOE WEST ROYALTY SOCCER TOURNAMENT



Under 14 Boys Premiere
2006 Silver Medalists - Central Queens



Under 14 Girls 1st Division
2006 Gold - East Kings



Under 14 Girls 1st Division
2006 Silver Medalists - Saint John



Under 16 Boys 1st Division
2006 Gold Medalists - Halifax City Mazda



Under 16 Boys 1st Division
2006 Silver Medalists - Scotia



Under 16 Boys Premiere
2006 Silver Medalists - Sherwood Rangers



we support our
COMMUNITY

10TH ANNUAL WINSLOE WEST ROYALTY SOCCER TOURNAMENT



Under 16 Boys Premiere
2006 Gold Medalists - Winsloe West Royalty



Under 16 Girls 1st Division
2006 Gold Medalists - Fundy Breakers



Under 16 Girls 1st Division
2006 Silver Medalists - Grand Falls



Under 16 Girls Premiere
2006 Gold Medalists - Winsloe West Royalty

BIATHALON PEI

The PEI Police Association offered financial assistance to Biathalon PEI

Photo: (Left to Right)

William MacDonald, Student;

Cst. Natalie McCabe;

Bob Bentley, Biathalon President;

Kate Thompson, Student





we support our
COMMUNITY

2006 PARKSIDE SCHOOL BICYCLE RODEO

The PEIPA sponsored the 2006 Parkside School Bicycle Rodeo in which over 50 students (grades one-six) participated. Shown is Cst. Lorna Deware on behalf of the PEIPA.



SPROCKIDS



The PEI Police Association sponsored the “Sprockids” program in which ten adults were trained to teach bicycle safety to children between the ages of six and fourteen. Representing the PEIPA is Cpl. Murphy (standing, back row) and Cst. McCluskey (kneeling, front row)



PRINCE STREET SCHOOL



PEIPA supports the Prince Street School Breakfast program, which feeds breakfast every morning to approximately one-third of the school population (90 children). Cst. Sid Stead (Left) and Cst. Tim Keizer (Right), are shown here making a presentation to the program.



MARY MCKINNON MEMBER OF TEAM ATLANTIC

Mary McKinnon, of Summerside, was the Team Captain for Team Atlantic at the "Under 18 Women's National Hockey Championships" in Salmon Arm, BC (Nov. 9-13/05). She is shown here wearing the "National Bronze Medal" which Team Atlantic won at the event. It was the first-ever medal for Team Atlantic!

Mary was a member of Team P.E.I. at the "Esso Senior Women's National Hockey Championships" in Sydney, NS (Mar. 8-12/06). She is holding the trophy she won for "Most Valuable Player" in Pool 'B' at the tournament.



we get LETTERS



CHARLOTTETOWN ABBIES #1

Dear PEI Police Association,

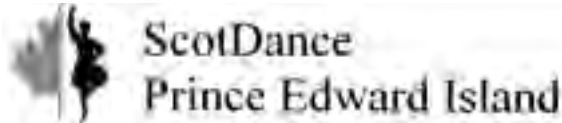
I would like to take the opportunity to thank the PEI Police Association for their generous donation made towards the Charlottetown Abbies #1 hockey team. The players of my team were extremely appreciative of the assistance your association provided which helped out in dealing with some of the expenses of the team, in particular, the purchase of team jackets.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Gary B. McLeod, Coach
Charlottetown Abbies #1

Adam Dow, Adam McKenna, Brad Heron, Brent Simmons, Chad MacDonald, Chris MacMillan, Colin Simmons, Craig Norton, Dane McKearney, Denver Roberts, Kevin McLeod, Lucas MacArthur, Matthew McNeil, Nathan Barrett, Patrick Davies, Ryan Mills, Taylor Dunn



Dear Mr. MacLean,

On behalf of ScotDance PEI and all of the Highland dancers, please accept our thanks for your generous awards sponsorship at the recent Atlantic Canada Open Highland Dancing Championships and ScotDance PEI Competition.

Our awards were carefully selected and were a wonderful reward for the achievements of our dancers.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Barbara Yorke
President



9th Annual Benefit Hockey Game

March 30, 2006

On Thursday, March 30th, 2006, the Charlottetown Police Association were proud to host their **9th Annual Benefit Hockey Game** at the Charlottetown Civic Centre, featuring the Tim Hortons All Stars.

As it is each year, the game was a tremendous success! Over **\$15,000** was raised to support the **Charlottetown Police Association's** many activities in the area, including generous contributions to the **Queen Elizabeth Hospital Foundation, Prince Street School Breakfast Program, The Venture Group, the Pediatric Unit** and the **Tim Horton Children's Foundation**.



What is a Drug?

In general, a drug is defined as any substance, other than food, which is taken to change the way the body and/or mind function.

Mood-altering drugs - also called psychoactive (sy-ko-active) drugs - are drugs that can change or affect the way a person thinks, feels or acts. These drugs usually have physical effects as well, but the thing that sets them apart from other drugs is that they work on the mind and the senses. The word "psychoactive" literally means working (active) on the mind or behaviour (psycho).

The effects of a drug are also influenced by how it is taken and by factors such as the age and gender of the person who uses the drug.

Drug use is often described as being legal or illegal (although, for most drugs, it is the possession, manufacture, cultivation and/or sale of the drugs which may be judged technically to be legal or illegal). Most drugs used for medicinal purposes are legally available by prescription or sold over-the-counter. A large number of drugs prescribed in Canada each year are psychoactive drugs that can be used to relieve pain, calm nervousness or aid sleep. Drugs used for non-medicinal purposes include alcohol and tobacco which can be purchased or used legally by almost anyone who is of legal age.

Some drugs are usually obtained illegally. These include cannabis (marijuana [marihuana], hashish [hash] and hash oil), cocaine, heroin and LSD. Such drugs are usually produced (grown or manufactured in illegal laboratories) for sale on the street. Prescription drugs are also sold and possessed illegally when the transaction does not involve the legal filling of a valid prescription (e.g., Ritalin® and Percodan® are often sold on the street).

When the term "drug" is used, it includes drugs used for medicinal and non-medicinal purposes, whether used legally or illegally.

Drugs can come from plants growing wild in fields or planted as a crop, or they can be manufactured in laboratories. They can be helpful or harmful and they may or may not have recognized medicinal properties or purposes.

The continuum of risk provides a framework for understanding drug use and its hazards and consequences as discussed in the following sections. People who use drugs may be at different points on the continuum of risk for different drugs, e.g., a person may be using one drug at a level that results in negative consequences, but using another drug on an occasional or social basis, or using medication as directed. The continuum ranges from no use to dependence.

No use - the person does not use alcohol or other drugs.

Experimental Use - the person tries a drug out of curiosity and may or may not use the drug again.

Social or Occasional Use - the person uses the drug in an amount or frequency that is not harmful (e.g., a drink on a social occasion).

Medication Used as Directed - the person uses a drug as prescribed, under medical supervision. The risk of harm is minimized.

Harmful Use - the person experiences negative consequences of drug use, e.g., health problems, family, school, work problems, legal problems.

Dependence - the person is psychologically and/or physically dependent on a drug, which is used excessively and the use continues despite the person experiencing serious problems.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

When Does Drug Use Become a Problem?

Drug use becomes a problem when use of a drug results in negative consequences for the person who uses the drug. These may be physical, mental, social, emotional, legal, economic or environmental consequences. When a person continues to use a drug despite negative consequences to him or herself or to other people such as family, friends or employer, this use is often informally referred to as drug or substance abuse. Other terms used to describe drug use associated with negative consequences include "misuse", "dependence" and "addiction". As well as being used informally to describe the negative consequences of drug use, the terms "abuse" and "dependence" are also used by professionals in classifying substance-related disorders, e.g., drug dependence, alcohol abuse.

"Drug or substance misuse" is generally used to describe drug problems that are less serious or longstanding or, in some cases, inadvertent, such as not complying with prescription medication instructions.

When used informally, "dependence" refers to when a person who uses drugs feels unable to function without taking the drug. Dependence may be either psychological or physical or both. Dependence includes continued use of the drug despite adverse consequences and usually, but not always, the presence of tolerance and withdrawal symptoms.

Although the term "addiction" is no longer used as a medical diagnosis, it is still commonly used to describe a range of compulsive behaviours, including drug abuse and gambling problems. It is also often used to describe specialized services (as well as related policies and activities) for people with drug abuse problems.

Drug abuse can result in increased risk of health problems such as illness, injuries and physical damage

to the body or death.

Drug abuse can result in personal problems such as loss of motivation, or physical and/or psychological dependence, problems at work or school.

Drug abuse can result in family problems like strained and unhappy family relationships and family breakdown.

Drug abuse can contribute to social problems like increased crime and traffic crashes.

Drug abuse can also result in financial costs to society for things like health care, crime or lost productivity.

Sometimes even the use of a drug for medicinal purposes can cause problems. These problems may occur because of side effects from the medication, or because the drug is used for too long, at the wrong dosage or because the person does not use it as directed.

Different Types of Drug Problems

Drug problems can develop for a variety of reasons and from use of any type of drug.

Using Drugs Too Much

Use of a drug can cause a problem if too much of the drug is taken at one time or if the drug is taken too frequently.

These problems may include immediate consequences such as unpleasant side effects or even a harmful or fatal overdose. Other problems may take some time to develop, such as needing more of the drug to achieve the same effect and becoming dependent on the drug.

(continued...)

(...When does drug use become a problem... continued)

Some medicinal drugs can have a beneficial effect if taken at the correct dose for that person, but cause problems if too large a dose of the drug is taken or if the drug is used more frequently than prescribed. In the same way, a drug like alcohol may not be harmful if taken in moderation. Many of the problems caused by alcohol result from drinking too much at one time.

Using Drugs for Too Long

A drug can cause problems if it is taken regularly for a long period of time. Some medicinal drugs, like pain killers, as well as drugs taken to aid sleep or reduce anxiety, can cause problems if they are taken after they are no longer needed. For instance, people who use drugs may have difficulty stopping use of the drug because they have become dependent on it.

Taking Drugs for the Wrong Reasons

A drug can cause problems if it is taken for the wrong reason. A common example is using alcohol as a way of coping with unpleasant feelings, rather than drinking as part of a social or celebratory occasion.

Taking Drugs Without Following Directions

Taking drugs without paying attention to label directions and warnings can also lead to serious problems, especially with drugs that can impair driving performance and drugs that should not be mixed with alcohol. Taking a drug prescribed for someone else is another example of not following directions as a prescription label designates that the prescription is for a particular individual. Also, taking less than the prescribed dose of a drug or stopping its use too early can result in problems.

Combining Drugs

A drug can cause problems if it is taken in combination-either knowingly or unknowingly- with certain other drugs. Some combinations can produce

unwanted and unexpected effects. Using alcohol with a benzodiazepine increases the likelihood that the person who uses the drugs may feel increased effects such as drowsiness, dizziness and confusion. Other combinations, like barbiturates with alcohol, can cause death.

Extremely Dangerous Drugs

With a few drugs, like PCP (Angel Dust), and inhalants such as gasoline, the potential dangers are extremely high and there are no legitimate human uses. These drugs can cause serious problems no matter how or when they are taken. With such drugs there is no difference between use and abuse. To use them is to abuse them.

Commonly Used and Abused Drugs

Caffeine is the most commonly used psychoactive drug in our society. However, alcohol and tobacco are the most widely abused drugs by both young people and adults. Abuse of these two drugs results in enormous costs to both the individual person who uses drugs and society. Among smokers, those who begin smoking as adolescents often become regular, lifelong smokers. Smoking and heavy drinking are major causes of health problems and premature death among Canadians, and they result in enormous costs to both the individual and society.

Illegal use of drugs is more common among adolescents and young adults than other age groups. Several surveys have found that as many youth report using cannabis in the past year as tobacco. In contrast, use of medication to aid sleep or reduce anxiety is more common among seniors than other age groups.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

How do you know if you have a problem?

There are signs...

If you think that you or a friend might have a problem, remember that admitting it is the first step to dealing with it, and there are a lot of people who will gladly lend their help. Learn what help is available.

Problem signals:

In this case "high" refers to the effects of alcohol and other drugs.

- You feel you need to get high before school, or while you are at school.
- You find your favourite activities are suddenly boring unless you're high.
- You choose activities based on whether or not you'll be able to get high.
- You stop doing activities that don't allow for you to drink or do drugs.
- You choose new friends, and snub old ones, based on whether or not they like to get high with you.
- You find it takes more and more drugs or alcohol to actually get high.
- You notice you're spending a lot more money than before on drugs and alcohol.
- You start drinking or doing drugs just to deal with your problems.
- You have trouble remembering things.
- You feel sad, angry or anxious when you are not high.
- You drink and/or get high by yourself.
- You like to get high first thing in the morning.
- You find that you have to choose between getting high and taking care of basic duties at home, work or school.
- You argue and fight with people you care about - more than before.
- You always want to get high.
- You drive when you're high.
- You find you're not as alert or "on the ball" as usual.
- You find yourself taking serious risks, just to get high - like going to dangerous areas where drug dealers hang out.
- You start trying new types of drugs in search of a more intense high.
- You start mixing drugs with alcohol, again in search of a more intense high.

Naturally, just because one or two of these symptoms happen to apply to you, doesn't mean that it's time to check yourself in, but if lots of them apply, it may be time for you to recognize that you may have a problem.

Remember, problems with substance use may creep up on you and it's so much easier to deal with problems early on. The longer you wait, the harder it is because your brain and body take over and the cravings can be extremely difficult to deal with.

Talking helps... big time!

Hey, it's a tough world out there, with all of the peer pressure, everyday life challenges and mixed media messages and that's why talking helps. Everyone has a different take on things and while you may know a lot about one thing, someone else knows about something else that might even be related to your situation. Friends, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, teachers, guidance counsellors - and especially parents - are excellent to talk to, even if you don't agree with everything they say. They might surprise you because, after all, they were once your age too and you probably have way more in common than you think. Give it a try!

Long-term consequences: if you don't deal with things early enough

Not all drug and alcohol-related problems are obvious. Some develop over time, below the radar, but as you'll see in this list, they can be extremely serious. The best way to prevent this from happening to you is to catch the signs early, and deal with things while it's still relatively easy to do so.

- Just like cigarettes, marijuana smoke is full of tar and chemicals (more than 400 kinds) and there's no question that this can't be good for our lungs, throat and esophagus. One particular cancer-causing agent called "Benzo (alpha) Pyrene" can be even more concentrated in marijuana smoke than it is in tobacco smoke.
- Many substances - alcohol in particular - can lower inhibitions and cloud your judgement. This means you might do things you would otherwise not do, because of the effects of the drugs on your brain. And it can be scary, in addition to being embarrassing. You might engage in risky sex (which can lead to unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases) or you might even take additional drugs that you normally wouldn't go near.

(continued...)

(...How do you know if you have a problem... continued)

- Regular and long-term use of alcohol and marijuana interferes with your ability to concentrate, and it makes it harder to learn new things and remember what you already know - and the likely consequence would be poor performance at school and work.
- Marijuana use can trigger psychotic episodes in people that have a high risk for schizophrenia, a psychotic disorder where a person has trouble determining reality, and experiences illogical thinking patterns, delusions and hallucinations. The risk is more likely for people with families that have a history of the disorder.
- Loss of self-control is a fairly common result of problematic substance use in general. When people are drunk or high, they can do things way out of the ordinary so this is certainly something worth thinking about.
- Chronic use of alcohol, for example, can result in serious health problems including nervous system diseases, psychological disorders like anxiety and depression, cancer of the mouth, tongue, esophagus, stomach, and liver - just to name a few.

What increases or decreases your risk of developing problems?

Research has identified certain life factors that influence a person's likelihood of developing a substance abuse problem. These factors involve friends, family and activities - and where you live - so if you want to avoid or change risky situations, or deal with an existing problem, the factors below will help you understand what might be influencing you.

Factors associated with an *increased risk*

Individual Factors

- Ease of access to alcohol, cigarettes and other substances.
- Age of first use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances (starting before age 14 tends to result in bigger problems later).

Peer Factors (people your age)

- Peer risk-taking behaviour.
- Peer influence on your decision making.

Family Factors

- Family history of substance abuse.
- Family smoking behaviour.
- Parental approval of substance use.
- Family conflict.

School Factors

- Not involved with school activities.
- Poor grades.
- Early signs of leaving school (like cutting classes).

Community Factors

- Neighbourhood disorganization (litter, older buildings, few facilities or services).
- Few pro-social activities (like community social activities).

Factors associated with a decreased risk

Individual Factors

- Participation in pro-social activities (like sports and recreation).

Family Factors

- Bonding (support from parents/caregivers).
- Family harmony (getting along with parents, brothers and sisters).
- Parental monitoring (like curfews).

School Factors

- Connection with school (being involved in school activities).
- Good grades.

Community Factors

- Positive adults in the neighbourhood (strong local leaders).
- Many pro-social activities (like teen drop in centres, sports facilities).

It's never too late to get help

Research shows that if a young person starts using a substance at an early age - like around 14 - he or she is more likely to develop problems with substance abuse in the future. But this doesn't mean you have to start at an early age for it to become a problem; it's just an additional warning sign of an increased-risk.

Remember, there's a ton of available help - even if you just have questions - and getting help almost always works, no matter how serious your situation might be.

<http://drugwise-droquesoisfute.hc-sc.gc.ca>

Prescription Drugs And Youth

Prescription drugs can be helpful when used appropriately. When not used as intended, or when used by individuals not prescribed the medication, prescription drugs are harmful.

The abuse of prescription drugs is an increasing issue for youth in this province. The 1996 Newfoundland and Labrador Student Drug Use Survey (SDUS), administered to students in grades 7, 9, 10, and 12, reports that 5.1% of students have experimented with stimulants physicians did not prescribe for them, over 4% have used non-prescribed tranquilizers, and 2.1% have tried non-prescribed barbiturates.

In recent years, addictions counsellors, police, and school personnel, have reported their concern over an increase in youth prescription drug abuse.

Many harmful side effects may occur when taking non-prescribed drugs. Regular use may lead to physical and psychological dependence. High doses of barbiturates, for example, can result in death due to respiratory arrest. Mixing prescription drugs with alcohol can be lethal.

Prescribed drugs encompass a wide range of categories including Barbiturates (Seconal), Benzodiazepine (Ativan), Stimulants (Ritalin and Amphetamines), and Opiates (Codeine and Morphine).

Why Youth Abuse Prescription Drugs

- **Availability** ~ In the last number of years, there has been an increase in the number of prescription drugs available on the street. There are reports of prescription drugs being sold in school yards and at recreational facilities.
- **Accessibility** ~ Youth are reporting easy access to a variety of prescription drugs.
- **Peer Pressure** ~ The misuse and abuse of non-prescribed prescription drugs is becoming more acceptable within youth circles.
- **Adult Behavior** ~ Youth model the behavior and attitudes they observe.
- **Family Problems** ~ Youth often turn to substances to cope with stresses in their family.

Prescription Drugs and the Law

The Controlled Drugs and Substances Act states that in some cases it is illegal to possess prescription drugs without a physician's authorization. Obtaining prescription drugs containing a narcotic, without advis-

ing the physician that you have received a similar prescription within the last thirty days, is called Double-Doctoring. If convicted of this illegal activity, sentencing may include imprisonment.

Actions we can take to Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse

- As a parent we can ensure that all prescription drugs are used and stored appropriately.
- As a community we can inform the police of any suspicious activity.
- As a school we can educate our students about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. As well, we can establish policies to help eliminate the buying and selling of prescription drugs on school property.
- As students we can become aware of the dangers of prescription drug misuse and make the use of such substances unacceptable.

Activities

The following activities are suggested as ways to increase awareness around this issue:

1. Develop a display on the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse
2. Organize an "open-line" show to provide students with the opportunity to share their views on the prescription drug issue
3. Discuss the issues around prescription drug misuse and how you as a group can help alleviate the problem
4. Invite the RNC or RCMP, Addictions Services Staff or a Pharmacist in to discuss the issues around youth and prescription drug abuse
5. Show videos depicting teen prescription drug abuse issues. Videos are available by contacting the Addiction Services Office nearest you.

Help is Available

If you or someone you know is involved in prescription drug misuse or abuse, help is available. Talk to an Addictions Counselor, the School Guidance Counselor, the Police, or a close friend.

www.health.gov.nl.ca

Addiction: What does it mean?

The term "addiction" is used - often overused - in all sorts of ways. You hear about people being addicted to a lot of things - to tv, to the computer, to video games, to hockey. All people really mean is that the person is obsessively taken to a particular interest or activity. When it comes to alcohol and other drugs, though, "addiction" takes on a more specific meaning.

What is important to understand is that there may be physical, emotional, social or legal risks and consequences in taking alcohol and other drugs. A person may experience a range of problems when these risks and consequences happen in his or her life.

Let's try to understand this more by explaining the following terms which are often misunderstood: addiction, drug dependence, substance abuse and substance use.

Characteristics of a person who is "addicted" to taking drugs and/or alcohol:

- the person repeatedly takes substances
- they are periodically or chronically intoxicated, which means that the person is stoned and/or drunk most or all of the time

- the person shows an irresistible urge to take substance(s)
- they have great difficulty in voluntarily stopping or cutting down their use
- he or she is determined to obtain substances by almost any means.

Drug Dependence

You may also have heard of "drug dependence." While it almost means the same as addiction, this term generally refers to a person taking repeated doses of substances to feel good or to avoid feeling bad (both physically and psychologically). Even if taking substances causes problems, this person may not be able to stop.

A person may become addicted or dependent from using/abusing alcohol and/or other drugs without realizing that certain problems come from this use.

Regardless of whether a person calls it addiction, abuse, dependence, or use, the most important thing to remember is that taking these substances causes or contributes to problems in a person's life. He or she needs to understand this and get help to deal with these problems.

<http://drugwise-droguoisfute.hc-sc.gc.ca>



Health Canada Santé Canada

Prescription Drug Abuse

“We have become the generation of the quick fix.”

Abusing prescription drugs is dangerous - some may argue that they are more addictive than illegal drugs. Their concentration is pure and strong and they tend to be inexpensive and readily accessible. These characteristics make this form of substance abuse particularly disturbing. Even though communities have experienced this problem for years, there has been a real wake up call over the past few years that this problem has escalated to a new level.

Armed robberies, home invasions, threatened families, stolen credit cards, pharmacy break-ins, stealing from employers, prostitution, homelessness- these are regular media stories that are appearing daily on Prince Edward Island. When listening to police reports or reading results of court cases, one cannot miss the fact that prescription drugs had some factor in the case. Many deaths have been attributed to prescription drugs (accidental and intentional).

The most commonly abused prescription drugs on PEI are:

- Pain Killers (narcotics or opioids) Most common ones are: Dilaudid, Oxycontin, Oxycodone, Morphine, Percocet
- Tranquillizers and Sleeping Pills (Benzodiazepines) Most common ones here are: Valium, Librium, Halcion
- Anti-depressants: Prozac, Paxil
- Stimulants (enhance brain activity): Ritalin, Amphetamine, Dextroamphetamine, Methamphetamine

Most common reasons we have heard as to why many addicts are now using legal prescription drugs:

- 1) “Prescription drugs are safe because they are prescribed by a doctor.”
- 2) “Prescription drugs are inexpensive because I can get them through my medical plan.”
- 3) Medications to treat such conditions as ADHD are being more heavily prescribed among this population than in the past. As a result these drugs are either being

misused and getting into the wrong hands.

- 4) Possession of prescription drugs is hard for the police to lay charges as they are legal.

Law Enforcement Officers work in collaboration to enforce the laws and keep a check on the drugs being bought and sold, but, prescription drugs found are very hard to prove fraudulent. Many are purchased over the Internet at an alarming rate. At present, there is not an electronic filing system in place for doctors prescribing addictive drugs. There is a system being put in place by the Provincial Government, which should be in effect by fall 2007. This will help with cases of double-doctoring and over-prescribing.

According to the National Drug Strategy, prescription drug abuse rivals the level of illicit drug abuse in our country.

Community Group:

Recognizing that there is a problem with prescription drug abuse is the first step. Educating the public, doctors and health care workers is the next step.

The PEI Prescription Drug Awareness Group has brought community leaders and interested and concerned members of the community together to work on education and awareness, improved treatment programs, and creating and implementing strong laws that call for swift and sure consequences for prescription fraud and abuse. Community Coalitions can play an important role in preventing and combating prescription drug abuse. Our group has created initiatives and campaigns that focus on prescription drug abuse - education and awareness, prevention, advocating and linking it to crime.

Pharmacists:

Pharmacists play a key role in preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse by providing clear information and advice about how to take medications properly. Information about the side effects and drug interactions are part of their regular routine here on PEI. Our local pharmacists help prevent prescription drug fraud by looking at false or altered prescription forms.

(continued...)

Doctors:

Doctors are in a unique position not only to prescribe needed medications appropriately, but also to identify prescription drug abuse when it exists and help patients recognize the problem, set goals for recovery, and seek appropriate treatment when necessary. Unfortunately, many doctors do not receive the necessary training in medical school to make them effective at carrying out these functions. They should be alerted to the fact that those addicted to or selling prescription medications may engage in “doctor shopping,” hitting out patients in different regions in an effort to get multiple prescriptions for the drugs they abuse or sell.

Assessing Prescription Drug Abuse - four simple questions:

- 1) Have you ever felt the need to cut down on your use of prescription drugs?
- 2) Have you ever felt annoyed by remarks your friends or loved ones made about your use of prescription drugs?
- 3) Have you ever felt guilty or remorseful about your use of prescription drugs?
- 4) Have you ever used prescription drugs as a way to “get going” or “to calm down?”

What are Prescription Drugs?

Prescription drugs are used very successfully to treat a variety of injuries, conditions and illnesses. Their high level of effectiveness can bring needed relief to people suffering from pain, anxiety or medical conditions.

Because many medications affect important brain and body functions, a prescription from a doctor, dentist or other healthcare professional is required to use them. When prescription medications are used to “get high,” it is drug abuse. Abuse of prescription drugs is dangerous and can be deadly.

The Brain and Prescription Drugs:

Many prescription drugs alter the way the brain operates. Some can block pain messages to the brain. Others are able to speed up or slow down brain activity. Affecting the way the brain operates can alter the translations of the messages it receives and change

the message it sends back to the body. As a result, some of these medications bring relief to people who are feeling intense pain. Others have a calming effect or increase alertness.

It should be obvious that any medications that cause changes in how the brain operates are very serious, and can be very dangerous because they change the way the important systems of your body operate. Without supervision by a doctor or other health care professional, prescription medications can increase or decrease your breathing rate, heart rate and blood pressure. This can lead to seizures, coma or even death. They can also cause you to lose control of your actions, which can cause behavior that is embarrassing, or more importantly, dangerous to you or others.

Taking prescription drugs to “get high” is abuse. Without the expertise of a health care professional, medications that change the way the brain operates can have unexpected, serious and dangerous effects.

Prevention:

The best way to avoid misuse or abuse of prescription medications is to stop it before it starts. With accurate information, the doctor can help the patient avoid the problems caused by misuse or abuse. Some steps the doctor can take against misuse and abuse are:

- If the patient has experienced a trauma of some kind, perhaps counseling, support and non-prescription methods could be tried first
- Educating the patient about the medication, its effects, dosage and the importance of following the prescription exactly
- Making sure that there is not a substitute medication that will treat the condition but will be less likely for the patient to misuse.
- Requesting that the patient return regularly during treatment to check on the medication’s success at treating the condition and checking for signs of misuse or abuse
- Not prescribing large quantities of a medication at one time
- Making sure the patient, or the patient’s family,

(continued...)

reports any side effects or changes in the drug's effectiveness

- Making sure that the patient reports any medications prescribed by other doctors or health care professionals

Consequences:

Prescription drugs can help - or hurt! Depending on how prescription drugs are used, they can save a life...or end it.

Using medications improperly may cause changes in your breathing and heart rates, making them dangerously high or slow. Your body temperature may get way too high: comas and seizures are possible. It's also possible to die from an overdose.

Some prescription medications can cause a loss of coordination or judgment that may make you do things you normally wouldn't. You may do something dangerous that hurts you or someone else.

Besides the physical effects of prescription drug abuse, there are other consequences that abusers may have to face. Abusing prescription drugs can affect your relationship with your family. It can create problems at school and with your future education. You may end up losing some longtime friendships or be forced to give up some of your favorite activities. You could also get into serious problems with the law.

We have noticed that there is an increasing amount of first-time offenders appearing in court with charges of theft from employers, etc. Many had become accidental addicts and had to steal to pay for their drugs.

Some of the consequences of misusing or abusing prescription drugs include:

- uncontrollable diarrhea, vomiting and nausea
- body function disruptions - including excessive sweating, urination and thirst
- drowsiness, dizziness, shaking, insomnia
- severe and extensive rashes
- hospitalization
- death

It can affect other parts of your life, too- especially your education, employment and relationships with your family and friends.

Social Consequences:

Making the decision to abuse prescription drugs can lead to big changes in your life. There is a good chance that you would begin to act differently and that people would treat you differently. You might give up some of the activities that were always important to you. These changes in your behavior could have a huge impact on you, your family, and on your plans for the future. Some consequences include:

- losing longtime friends
- taking chances you normally would not
- losing interest in appearance
- losing interest in organizations like clubs or sports
- feeling worried or depressed
- stealing (to pay for drugs)
- developing a bad reputation

Legal Consequences:

Abusing prescription drugs can lead to problems with the law. The Federal Government decides which medications require a prescription. It is illegal for someone to give or sell you a prescription drug that was not prescribed for you. Prescription drug abuse can also lead to other behavior or incidents that could involve the police and the courts:

- stealing prescription drugs
- stealing to pay for prescription drugs
- supplying or selling prescription drugs to someone else
- violence that causes injury or property damage
- driving under the influence of prescription drugs (this could lead to loss of license, or even more serious charges if someone is injured or killed in an accident)

Consequences at Home:

Abusing prescription drugs can create serious, lasting

(continued...)

(...Prescription Drug Abuse... continued)

problems not just for you, but for your whole family. The effects of using the drug and covering up the abuse can lead to behavior that causes difficulties at home:

- personality change and mood swings
- less interest in family activities
- increase in arguments
- breaking rules, like ignoring curfew or assigned chores
- spending more time alone
- needing more money or stealing
- keeping activities and whereabouts a secret

Consequences at School and /or Work:

Trouble at school and work is most common:

Consequences you might experience at school include:

- dropping grades
- skipping school
- losing interest in class work and activities
- problems with school authorities
- suspension or being expelled

Consequences you might experience at work include:

- less productive
- missing work regularly
- losing interest in work and with co-workers
- problems with supervisors
- losing your job

Steroids:

One of the drugs we have not talked about recently has been Anabolic Steroids. Prescription anabolic steroids were developed to treat male hormone deficiencies that

prevent normal development and function. They are often abused because they seem to have the ability to increase muscle development. Anadol, Oxandrin and Winstrol are brand names of prescription anabolic steroids.

Getting Help:

What do you do if you've been abusing drugs and decide you want to stop, but you can't or don't know how? It's not as easy as you thought it would be. You might feel you want to talk to someone about getting help, but you're too embarrassed. Or you may be scared, or worried about getting in trouble.

You wouldn't be the first one to feel that way; but, the good news is, there are ways to get help for yourself or for one of your friends. It may not be as tough as you think with the proper treatment and medical care provided.

Talk to someone you trust. If you are uncomfortable with a close loved one, maybe there is a aunt, uncle or close friend who always took time to understand your problems or concerns. Maybe you know someone outside the family - a neighbour or clergyman or someone who is a good listener.

Even though it is rough getting started, people who care about you will know how to help.

The Government of Prince Edward Island offers a wealth of information on the topic of prescription drug abuse on their website "PEI Drug Info." Please visit the site at www.peidruginfo.ca for information that will help you or someone you love to escape the debilitating grip of prescription drug abuse.

(Information supplied by Family Health Centre, 243 Harbour Drive, Summerside, PEI)

Other options for help in escaping the grip of prescription drug abuse on PEI:

Provincial Addiction Services	1-888-299-8399
PEI Provincial Addictions Facility	1-902-368-4120
Co-Dependents Group	1-902-368-0029
Dual Recovery Group (Summerside)	1-902-888-9388
Narcotics Anonymous	1-902-205-8402
Prescription Drug Support Group	1-902-436-9856
Pills Anonymous	1-902-628-6163

Buying Drugs over the Internet

If you buy drugs on line, you may be putting your health at serious risk. This is especially true if you order prescription drugs without being examined in person by a health care practitioner.

A simple Internet search will turn up hundreds of Web sites that sell drugs. Some Internet pharmacies are legitimate, but many offer products and services that are dangerous. Some sell drugs that are not approved for use in Canada because of safety concerns. Some take advantage of people desperate for relief by offering "miracle cures" for serious illnesses like cancer. Many offer prescription drugs based on answers to an on-line questionnaire. These sites tell you they will save you the "embarrassment" of talking to your doctor about certain prescription drugs, such as Viagra, or drugs to prevent hair loss, or promote weight loss. What they do not tell you is that it is dangerous to take a prescription drug without being examined in person and monitored by a health care practitioner to make sure the drug is helping you.

Buying drugs from Internet pharmacies that do not provide a street address and telephone number may pose serious health risks. You have no way of knowing where these companies are located, where they get their drugs, what is in their drugs, or how to reach them if there is a problem. If you order from these sites, you may get counterfeit drugs with no active ingredients, drugs with the wrong ingredients, drugs with dangerous additives, or drugs past their expiry date. Even if these drugs do not harm you directly or immediately, your condition may get worse without effective treatment.

If you order prescription drugs without being examined and monitored by a health care practitioner, you may be misdiagnosed, and miss the opportunity to get an appropriate treatment that would help you. You may also put yourself at risk for drug interactions, or harmful side effects that a qualified health professional could better foresee.

Buying drugs on the Internet may also pose financial risks. In some cases, the product may not be shipped at all, or if it is coming from another country, it could be stopped at the border by Canadian authorities.

A number of pharmacies in Canada have legitimate

Web sites that offer a limited range of products and services, including information for consumers, and shopping for certain items. The practice of pharmacy in Canada is regulated by the provinces, and any licensed pharmacy that offers Internet services must meet the standards of practice within its own province.

If you have questions about whether an Internet pharmacy is legitimate, contact the licensing body in your province or territory.

Minimizing Your Risk

Do not take any prescription drug that has not been prescribed for you by a health care practitioner who has examined you in person.

Do tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of the health products you take, including vitamin and natural health products, as well as prescription and over-the-counter drugs. They need this information to assess and advise you about potential side effects and drug interactions.

If you decide to order drugs on line:

Do not do business with a Web site that:

- refuses to give you a street address, telephone number, and a way of contacting a pharmacist
- offers prescription drugs without a prescription, or offers to issue a prescription based on answers to an on-line questionnaire
- claims to have a "miracle cure" for any serious condition
- sells products that do not have a DIN (see below) issued by Health Canada

Do make sure you are dealing with a Canadian-based Web site that is linked to a "bricks and mortar" pharmacy that meets the regulatory requirements in your province/territory.

Finally, if you have a question or complaint about therapeutic drug products purchased on line, call Health Canada's toll-free hotline: 1-800-267-9675

www.hc.sc.gc.ca

Proper Use and Disposal of Medication

There is growing evidence that throwing out or flushing into the water system prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs and other health products may have a harmful effect on the environment.

Over the past few decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of new human and veterinary drugs, and personal care products introduced to the Canadian marketplace. These drugs and products are adding to the array of chemicals and other substances present in the environment.

For the past 20 years, scientists and environmentalists have been aware of pharmaceutical traces in the environment.

The Risks of Improper Disposal of Drugs

When prescription or over-the-counter drugs are thrown into the garbage, or flushed down the sink or toilet, their chemical components may be added to the water supply or soil. The presence of these substances in the environment is emerging as an important national and international issue. Although the concentration levels of these products in the environment is very low, they may be enough to cause adverse effects in the environment and to human health. There are also concerns over the effects of medications ending up in drinking water sources.

Also, if a drug prescribed to fight infection is not taken as directed, antibiotic resistance can occur. This is believed to be caused by the overuse or inappropriate use of drugs such as antibiotics, in preventing or treating infection and disease in people, animals and plants. When antibiotics are used inappropriately, the weak germs are killed but the stronger, more resistant ones survive and multiply. These drug-resistant germs make it harder to prevent and treat infections and diseases because fewer antibiotics are effective against them.

Although there is not yet any solid evidence, there is also some concern about leftover prescriptions being disposed of in the environment and possibly adding to the problem of antibiotic resistance.

Proper Use and Disposal of Drugs

You can help lessen the impact of these risks by

disposing of drugs in a responsible way.

- Take drugs as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. Don't stop taking a drug part way through the course of treatment, unless you are having a serious adverse reaction, without first discussing it with your doctor. Even if you feel better, use up the entire prescription as directed to make sure that all the germs are destroyed.
- Do not put out-of-date or unused medication in the garbage or down the toilet or sink.
- Check to see if your pharmacy has a drug recycling program that disposes of unused or expired drugs in an environmentally safe manner. Most pharmacies do and programs exist in B.C., Alberta and many parts of other provinces and territories to incinerate unused drugs.
- If your area does not have such a program, see if your municipality incinerates drugs. If so, take your unused drugs to your municipality's waste disposal depot.
- At least once a year, go through your medicine cabinet and remove prescription drugs that are old or that you no longer take. Check the expiry dates on non-prescription drugs and remove those that are outdated as well. Take them all back to your pharmacy or to your municipal waste disposal depot.
- If you don't know if a drug is still good, check with your pharmacist.

How the Government is Taking Action Drug Disposal

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) is Canada's primary federal law to protect the environment and human health. It is jointly administered by Environment and Health Canada. Health Canada is now developing new Environmental Assessment Regulations (EAR) for products regulated under the *Food and Drugs Act*, including pharmaceuticals, personal care products, drugs, natural health products, veterinary drugs and other products. The draft regulations will be developed over the next few years. Health Canada is engaging in preliminary discussion on developing a national education campaign on the proper use and disposal for products regulated under the *Food and Drug Act*.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

IN THE NEWS...

ADDICTION BY PRESCRIPTION

(Topic of May workshops)

Journal Pioneer

(Prince Edward Island's Home Newspaper)

April 29, 2003

by Patricia Roy

When tragedy strikes, the response from the medical profession is often to medicate in order to help people cope.

And that's just what happened to Joan Gadsby when her four-year-old son died of a brain tumor in 1966.

Over the next 20 years, her career, family, financial security and health were all compromised or threatened by her addiction to prescribed medication.

Gadsby, author of *Addiction by Prescription*, *One Woman's Triumph and Fight For Change*, has emerged from her addiction to become an internationally-recognized expert and public speaker on the responsible and informed use of benzodiazepines (tranquilizers and sleeping pills).

She will present a series of workshops for service providers and health-care workers on the potential risks and consequences of prescription drugs addictions.

The free workshops and presentations, co-sponsored by the East Prince Women's Information Centre, and the Prince County Addiction Auxiliary, will take place in three regions of the province May 14 to 16.

Public presentations will take place May 14, from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Dutch Inn in Cornwall, at the Loyalist Country Inn in Summerside Thursday, May 15, and at the Rodds Mill River Resort, May 16.

Presentations for physicians will take place at Prince County Hospital from 8 to 9 a.m. May 15, and in West Prince May 16, with time and location to be confirmed. Gadsby states in her book that many people are under the impression that they would have to take sleeping pills for long periods of time in order to become addicted when, in fact, 60 per cent of users suffer adverse effect and withdrawal after just two to four weeks of use at therapeutic dose levels.

She notes that withdrawal symptoms can include

insomnia, panic attacks, agitation, hallucinations, anxiety, loss of appetite, weight loss, visual distortions, lack of concentration, nightmares, depression palpitations, creeping sensations in the skin, sweating, nausea, increased sensitivity to light, touch and smell and the list goes on.

The long-term, adverse effect of these medication has been known for a long time, yet, Gadsby notes that thousands of lives have been devastated by the over-prescribing of such substances.

Dr. Reg Peart, president international Benzodiazepine Awareness Network, London, England, states on the back jacket of Gadsby's book, that "sleeping pills and tranquilizers are the best-selling drugs in the history of medicine, with annual world-wide sales of an estimated \$21 billion."

Despite society's belief that there should be a pill for every ill and the push by drug manufacturers to further this notion, as well as the fact that patients may not be totally without guilt, Gadsby makes no apologies in her book as to where the blame really lies.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 33 per cent of diseases today are caused by medical treatment or doctor-induced illness.

"Doctors are the third leading cause of death in the United States after heart disease and cancer, causing an estimated 250,000 deaths each year according to an article published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, July 2000."

In the United States, statistics compiled by the Drug Abuse-Warning Network regarding hospital emergency-department admissions show that benzodiazepine accounted for more suicide attempts each year than any other prescription drug.

However, Gadsby says conscientious health professionals see the dangers and havoc created by these

(continued...)

IN THE NEWS...

drugs and a worldwide movement to educate and change the status quo is gaining momentum.

"It is legally significant, too, that there are more and more cases worldwide of people being charged with crimes such as shoplifting, criminal negligence in vehicular accidents, assault, manslaughter and murder, and using what is termed the "benzo defence" in court. Under the influence of these drugs, defendants claim, they simply had no idea what they were doing, could not recall or did not know the role of drug effects in precipitating their aggressive, hostile, antisocial and violent behavior.

Research going back decades supports this," Gadsby writes.

"There is little doubt that people become disabled from these drugs - both when they are on them and during withdrawals - and that they can suffer cognitive impairment for years following discontinuance."

Although the quality of her life is 10 times what it was while she was on the drugs, Gadsby says she lives with

their long-term and residual effects, including sensitivity to light, some problems with co-ordination, some emotional flatness and some cognitive-related difficulties.

Gadsby, who is president/owner of Market Media International Corporation, graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Western Ontario, has an honorary PhD prescription drug addiction, medical research, public health and promotion.

Co-executive producer and research consultant of TV documentary, *Our Pill Epidemic - The Shocking Story of a Society Hooked on Drugs*, Gadsby has done post-graduate studies in an MBA program at University of British Columbia, Marketing and Industrial Relations, and was a councillor for the district of North Vancouver for 13 years.

Editor's note: This is the first of a four-part series on addiction to prescription medications by Patricia Roy. The next one will feature an interview with a woman who became addicted to prescription medication after suffering an injury.

PRESCRIPTION CRIMES IN THE AREA

The following are a few examples of crime mixing with prescription drug abuse on Prince Edward Island:

June 28, 2002 – Two men living in a North Market Street residence face a number of drug and weapons-related charges following a raid by RCMP and Summerside police officers at their home. Police found more than 70 individual Dilaudid capsules in the residence.

July 3, 2002 – "John Doe," 23, was fined \$450 after pleading guilty to using a forged prescription Dilaudid. Defense attorney Trish Cheverie said he had been prescribed the drug for pain and became addicted.

October 31, 2002 – Driven by his craving for the prescription drug Dilaudid, 25-year-old "John Doe" of O'Leary went on a crime spree in late July and early August to fuel his addiction. The charges against him were break, enter and theft into the O'Leary Wildlife Federation building in Carleton, Irving Oil plant, the Key, McKnight and Maynard law office, the O'Leary Co-op Feed Mill, Hyndman's insurance and the O'Leary Lions Club.

November 18, 2004 – "John Doe," 24, of Charlottetown, received 16 months in jail and two years probation on 28 property-related offenses – many that involved using altered money orders. Defense

lawyer Trish Cheverie said his criminal acts were directly related to serious a narcotics addiction (Dilaudid, Oxycontin and cocaine). As part of his probation, he was ordered to participate in a methadone program.

September 17, 2004 – "John Doe," 30, of Miscouche, was sentenced to 16 months house arrest and two years probation on four charges of possession for the purpose of trafficking. He was found in possession of painkillers Dilaudid, methadone, and Oxycontin with a total value of \$6,000.

July 19, 2005 – An undisclosed quantity of prescription medication was seized by police during a raid on an Alberton residence. Police report a 47-year-old man from Alberton faces charges and is scheduled to appear in court in Summerside on August 31. RCMP said officers seized a large quantity of prescription medication, mainly Dilaudid.

July 20, 2005 – "Jane Doe," 43, of Summerside, pleaded guilty in Provincial Court to charges stemming from two thefts of narcotics at the hospital where she worked as a nurse. She admitted to staff to taking the

PEI Prescription Drug Awareness Group

Family Health Centre, 243 Harbour Drive, Summerside, PEI, C1N 5R1

Tel: 902-436-9856 , Fax: 902-888-2344

email: epwic@pei.aibn.com

Mission Statement:

The PEI Prescription Drug Awareness Group is dedicated to educating healthcare providers and the general public about the risks of addictive prescription drugs. The group is open to anyone interested in studying the risks and alternate treatments as recommended in evidence based materials by leading world experts.

The PEI Prescription Drug Awareness Group was formed in June, 2003. This group of volunteers has dedicated themselves to ensuring the message gets out loud and clear - Some prescription drugs are addictive and creating "accidental addicts." Many of these addicts have turned to criminal activities to pay for their addiction. Many of them don't even realize that they have become addicted until it is too late!

This message became quite obvious after three days of public consultations held across Prince Edward Island in May, 2003. These workshops and consultations were coordinated by our group, which at that point was a partnership of the East Prince Women's Information Centre and the Prince County Addiction Auxiliary. Over 700 health care providers, pharmacists, doctors, justice workers, police, addiction workers, addicts and recovered addicts and the general public attended these sessions that were held in each of the health regions.

The public response from these sessions lead us to form recovery and support groups and our awareness group. We felt the need to inform and educate the public about this increasing problem with the addictive drugs being prescribed and the abuse of them on the streets. We learned that the level of prescription drugs on the streets was taking over from the illegal drugs being sold. We learned that people were dying in our communities from this addiction and nobody seemed to be even talking about it.

Our first course of action was to form a strong committee comprised of members of the community representing various groups, organizations, stake holders, health workers, addiction workers, justice workers and policy advisors within the government. We spent countless hours researching, contacting experts and gathering as many resources possible in order to provide credible resources for the many inquiries we were receiving. A local doctor, Sheldon R. Cameron, MD, has worked in addictions for over thirty years and

has helped us organize this group. He has received many awards locally and nationally for his work. This past year, he was awarded the Volunteer of the Year at the Prince County Hospital, Summerside, the Mayors Medal of Honour, and has just received the Order of Prince Edward Island. These were awarded for this work he is doing.

Our group had a documentary released in November, 2003 by the CBC Fifth Estate. It covered the work we were doing, followed two members of our group through their recovery (recovered prescription drug addicts that were both told they would be required to be on these drugs the rest of their lives) and spoke to the world's leading expert on some of the addictive drugs. They also interviewed a world trade centre survivor that became addicted to his drugs being prescribed by a doctor. Another interview in the show was with the Pharmaceutical Company that produced one of the addictive drugs. Our group was grateful for this show, as they were able to acquire much more information and research for us than we would have ever been able to on our own.

We have met almost weekly since then, sometimes two and three times a week. We held a conference in June, 2005, which was funded by the National Crime Prevention Initiative. We titled it Prescription Drug Abuse (Addiction by Prescription): A Dialogue on Needs, Challenges and Links to Crime. We felt it was necessary to bring justice and health workers together to speak from their perspectives about the issues surrounding the addictive prescription drug problems. This was an opportunity for all involved to be fully informed and to see if they could form a new partnership to work collaboratively on root problems and workable solutions to the Prescription Drug Abuse on PEI.

We had a strong commitment from the PEI College of Physicians and Surgeons, the PEI Medical Society, the PEI Pharmacy Board, the Attorney General's Office, Justice and Police. We are starting to see some changes coming into effect that will help with some of the problems, such as monitoring and accountability on these prescribed drugs by the PEI College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Provincial Department of Health working on the electronic filing system for doctors and pharmacies.

We have joined with a Parent Support Group and are trying to promote the need for more resources and treat-

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ment programs for youth. Investing in our youth is of the upmost importance. From our research we can see that drug addiction is the number one reason for the increasing level of crime in youth and adults. Prescription Drugs are the hot commodity on PEI . We have become a generation of the quick fix and are beginning to realize _ do we need a drug for every ailment we have? Many of the youth that we have interviewed have started out on a prescription drug for ADD or ADHD. Some finished school, moved away from parents home and didn't continue their medications. They found that they started replacing their drugs with other drugs and the vicious addiction takes hold.

We have presented our recommendations to the Premier and Council and to the Health Minister. These recommendations show the need for more treatment programs that could help bring down the crime levels.

One of the areas that is growing at an out-of-control rate is the Internet Pharmacy. A recent interview with the Chief of Police in New York - he gave his 10 and 14 year-olds each a credit card number and asked them to see what prescription drugs they could order in one day over the Internet from Canada. Within 48 hours, the delivery trucks were coming hourly with the shipments. How these will be monitored we have no idea; but, it certainly would enable drug dealers to increase their sales a plenty!

We ask people when throwing out recyclables to not throw out bills with credit card numbers and not to advertise if family members have died of cancer as their homes are being broken into while attending the funeral.

We have started an annual fundraiser and awareness show for the Prescription Drug Awareness Group. It helps us to pay for printing brochures and gathering resources for various educational sessions and heightens the awareness of this issue. The fundraiser is in the fall. Last year's show was titled "Behind the Seams for the Style of your Own." It was produced by a recovered addict and member of our group. It was well attended and supported.

Prescription Drugs (ones that are common and most abused) on PEI that are addictive:

Benzodiazepines (Tranquilizers and sleeping pills)

Xanax	Rohypnol	Serax
Rivotril	Paxipam	Doral
Klonopin	Dalmane	Restoril
Valium	Ativan	Halcion
ProSom	Mogadon	

	<u>Narcotics (Painkillers)</u>	
Dilaudid	Morphine	Coedine
Oxycontin	Percocet	
	<u>Stimulants</u>	
Ritalin		Adderal
	<u>Anti Depressants</u>	
Prozac	Celaxa	Serzone
Zoloft	Lexapro	Remeron
Paxil	Wellbutrin	
Luvox	Effexor	
	<u>Amphetamines</u>	
	Dexedrine	

Become informed:

Some questions to ask your doctor if you are prescribed any of the above medications.

- Are the drugs addictive?
- What are the side effects?
- Will he/she carefully monitor effects of the drug on an ongoing basis?
- Are there interactions with other drugs I am on?
- How long should I take this medication?
- What non-drug alternatives are available for my diagnosis?
- What research is available on the effectiveness of the drug?
- How will the drug affect my overall functioning physically, mentally, emotionally, at work? ...at home? ...while driving a car?

In Atlantic Canada in the last three years, the quantity of these prescription drugs has increased 400% - Crime is up 40% - Family Violence is up 45% - Dilaudid is the current drug of choice on PEI today - Addiction to these drugs (especially the narcotics) has increased crime in Atlantic Canada to a crisis level! - Home invasions are becoming a norm!

Dr. Vernon Coleman, author of "Life without Tranquillizers" says, "The biggest drug addiction in the world doesn't involve heroin, cocaine or marijuana. In fact, it doesn't involve an illegal drug at all. The world's biggest drug addiction is posed by a group of drugs, the benzodiazepines, which are widely prescribed by doctors and taken by countless millions of perfectly ordinary people around the world - drug addiction experts claim that getting people off the benzodiazepines is more difficult than getting addicts off heroin."

CANADA'S DRUG STRATEGY

The harmful use of legal substances, such as alcohol and prescription drugs, and illegal substances, such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin and ecstasy, have serious, negative consequences for all Canadians. Canada's Drug Strategy, which was renewed in May 2003, is the federal government's response in addressing the harmful use of substances. Its ultimate goal is to see Canadians living in a society increasingly free of the harms associated with substance use

Comprehensive Approach

The Strategy uses a comprehensive approach to deal with both the demand for, and supply of, drugs based on four key pillars:

- **prevention** – measures to prevent problematic use of alcohol, other drugs and substances through education to help people make informed, healthy choices;
- **treatment** – activities for those who have developed an unhealthy dependency on legal or illegal substances;
- **enforcement** – measures that halt the unlawful import, export, production, distribution and possession of controlled substances, and the seizure and forfeiture of assets gained through the drug trade; and
- **harm reduction** – measures to limit possible secondary effects of substance use, such as the

spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

Areas of Activity

With the renewal of the Drug Strategy, the Government of Canada has reinforced the strong foundation provided by the four pillars, and broadened its commitment to the goal of the Drug Strategy by investing in four new areas of activity:

- **leadership** - to ensure coordination, consultation and accountability among the federal partners in the strategy and to reach out to other stakeholders as partnerships bring the best results;
- **research and monitoring** - to better understand substance abuse problems in Canada, and ensure effective decision-making;
- **partnerships and intervention** - to support community-based education and prevention initiatives to discourage and treat harmful substance use and to address marijuana grow operations and clandestine laboratories used to manufacture illegal substances; and,
- **modernized legislation and policy** - to ensure legislation and policy reflect the current views of Canadians.

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