

HORIZONS

of Health and Hope in Montezuma and Dolores Counties

MAY, JUNE, JULY 2009

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

IDENTIFYING THE RISKS OF ABUSE AND SIGNS OF USE AMONG YOUTH

Inhalant Abuse

By Stephanie Paige Ogburn

Is your middle-schooler huffing? How would you know? And what exactly is “huffing,” anyway?

Huffing involves inhaling volatile toxic substances, also known as inhalants, for the purposes of getting high. Inhalants are toxic products commonly found in home and office environments. Inhalant abuse is a dangerous form of drug abuse that many youth may participate in even before reaching high school. According to studies undertaken by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA), a government agency, inhalant abuse is the highest reported form of illicit drug use by youth age 12-13.

The most commonly abused inhalants among 12-15 year olds are glue, shoe polish, toluene (commonly found in paint thinners), spray paints, and gasoline or lighter fluids, according to a government-sponsored national drug use survey published in 2008. Among 16-17 year olds, nitrous oxide and whippets, which are aerosol sprays, were the most abused inhalants.

The risks of abusing inhalants are well-documented, and according to the National Institutes of Health, inhaling the highly toxic chemicals found in common household products can lead to permanent brain damage; loss of muscle control;

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Prescription Drug Abuse

By Stephanie Paige Ogburn

Many parents think of their home as a safe haven from drug abuse. They may be unaware that increasing numbers of adolescents find their drugs in what seems like a perfectly innocent place – someone else’s medicine cabinet.

***Parents can make a difference. Your kid may be mad now, but they will thank you later.”
-Kate, 19-year-old college student***

Prescription drug abuse among teens is on the rise. While use of illegal substances like marijuana and alcohol have subsided over the past five years, youth have increasingly turned to abusing prescription drugs, according to studies from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health indicates that every day 2,500 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 abuse a pain reliever for the very first time, and that more teens abuse prescription drugs than any drug except for marijuana.

Often, students who would otherwise stay away from illegal drugs abuse prescription drugs because they seem safer and are more readily available. But prescription drugs, taken without physician supervision, can be just as dangerous as illegal “street drugs.” Such drugs can react with other prescription drugs or with alcohol and over-the-counter drugs, leading to unexpected reactions that can have negative health impacts.

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We Are Invested In Our Youth



We listen to our community!

Tobacco Control Updates for Montezuma and Dolores Counties

Julia Hesse, Target Tobacco Coalition Coordinator

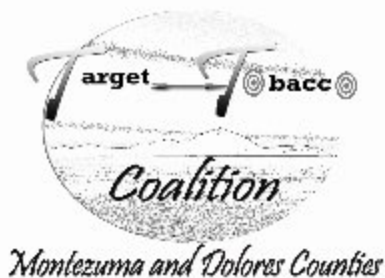
Center Adopts New Tobacco Policy

On April 1, 2009, Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center (SWCMHC) adopted a tobacco-free policy for all of their campuses in Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, and Dolores Counties. The policy, a result of their "Positively No Smoking" campaign, will promote smoking cessation for staff and clients and will insist that no tobacco products be allowed in or on the agency's properties. The policy applies to both staff and clients.

SWCMHC is to be commended for taking a major step in creating an environment that models healthy behavior and supports their clients in making healthy choices. This is particularly important for people who use mental health services. Studies have shown that persons with mental illnesses are nicotine dependent at rates that are 2-3 times higher than the general population. Although only 7.1% of the U. S. population has a psychiatric illness, this population consumes over 34.2% of all cigarettes in the U.S.¹ Persons with mental or psychiatric illnesses also die from tobacco-related causes at twice the rate of the general population. This is a tragedy that is entirely preventable. Persons with mental illnesses do want to quit smoking and have demonstrated they can be just as successful as the general population.

SWCMHC is working to ensure the success of this new policy by educating and training the staff on the benefits and reasons for the policy while also providing cessation support for staff and clients.

¹Grant BF, Hasin DS, Chou PS, Stinson FS, Dawson DA (2004) Nicotine dependence and psychiatric disorders in the United States. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 61(11): 1107-1115.



Spit Tobacco Online Quit Support for Young Adults

Local youth have a new resource to help them quit using spit tobacco. MyLastDip is a unique Web-based intervention that is designed to help chewing tobacco users aged 14 to 25 quit. The program was developed by researchers with over 30 years of experience in smokeless tobacco research and is funded by a government grant from the National Cancer Institute.

MyLastDip provides scientifically tested content that has proven effective in helping thousands of people quit the use of chewing tobacco or snuff. It is free to use- in fact, **participants are paid** to answer questions using an online survey several times over a 6-month period. MyLastDip can be used anytime you can access the Internet.

Teachers are encouraged to promote this service to their students. Check it out at www.MyLastDip.com.

Tobacco Funds Threatened

Colorado is facing a severe budget deficit and our elected officials have the unenviable task of balancing the budget. Legislators are hashing out the details as this article goes to press. One of the proposals winding its way through the process is to take \$35 million from Amendment 35 funds to help fill the gap.

Amendment 35 was passed in 2004 when Colorado voters overwhelmingly supported amending our state's constitution by increasing the tax on tobacco by 60 cents per pack. These funds are dedicated to creating preventive health programs and services, including tobacco prevention programs on the state and county level. The tobacco programs have been very successful, reducing the statewide tobacco use rate from 22% to 17% for adults and from 18.2% to 14.6% for youth. All of the Amendment 35 funded programs target the most costly diseases with proven prevention programs which save money in the long term.

Readers are encouraged to stay informed on the issues and stay involved with the democratic process by making sure their voices are heard by elected officials on these very important issues.

For more information on any of these subjects contact Julia at (970)565-3056 ext 233 or jhesse@co.montezuma.co.us

Research Links Poor Kids' Stress, Brain Impairment

By Rob Stein, Washington Post Staff Writer

Children raised in poverty suffer many ill effects: They often have health problems and tend to struggle in school, which can create a cycle of poverty across generations.

Now, research is providing what could be crucial clues to explain how childhood poverty translates into dimmer chances of success: Chronic stress from growing up poor appears to have a direct impact on the brain, leaving children with impairment in at least one key area -- working memory.

"There's been lots of evidence that low-income families are under tremendous amounts of stress, and we know that stress has many implications," said Gary W. Evans, a professor of human ecology at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., who led the research. "What this data raises is the possibility that it's also related to cognitive development." With the economic crisis threatening to plunge more children into poverty, other researchers said the work offers insight into how poverty affects long-term achievement and underscores the potential ramifications of chronic stress early in life.

"This is a significant advance," said Bruce S. McEwen, who heads the laboratory of neuroendocrinology at the Rockefeller University in New York. "It's part of a growing pattern of understanding how early life experiences can have an influence on the brain and the body."

Previous research into the possible causes of the achievement gap between poor and well-off children has focused on genetic factors that influence intelligence, environmental exposure to toxins such as lead and on the idea that disadvantaged children tend to grow up with less intellectual stimulation.

"People have hypothesized both genetic and environmental factors play a role in why poor children don't do as well in school," said Martha Farah, director of the center for cognitive neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Experiential factors can include things like having fewer trips to museums, having fewer toys, having parents who don't have as much time or energy to engage with them intellectually -- to read to them or talk to them."

But Evans, who has been gathering detailed data about 195 children from households above and below the poverty line for 14 years, decided to examine whether chronic stress might also be playing a role.

"We know low socioeconomic status families are under a lot of stress -- all kinds of stress. When you are poor, when it rains it pours. You may have housing problems. You may have more conflict in the family. There's a lot more pressure in paying the bills. You'll probably end up moving more often. There's a lot more demands on low income families. We know that produces stress in families, including on the children," Evans said.

For the new study, Evans and a colleague rated the level of stress each child experienced using a scale known as "allostatic load." The allostatic load score was based on the results of tests the children were given when they were ages 9 and 13 to measure their levels of the stress hormones cor-

tisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine, as well as their blood pressure and body mass index.

"These are all physiological indicators of stress," said Evans, whose findings were published online last week by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "The basic idea is this allows you to look at dysregulation resulting from stress across multiple physiological systems."

The subjects also underwent tests at age 17 to measure their working memory, which is the ability to remember information in the short term. Working memory is crucial for everyday activities as well as for forming long-term memories.

"It's critical for learning," Evans said. "If you don't have good working memory, you can't do things like hold a phone number in your head or develop a vocabulary."

When the researchers analyzed the relationships among how long the children lived in poverty, their allostatic load and their later working memory, they found a clear relationship: The longer they lived in poverty, the higher their allostatic load and the lower they tended to score on working-memory tests. Those who spent their entire childhood in poverty scored about 20 percent lower on working memory than those who were never poor, Evans said.

"The greater proportion of your childhood that your family spent in poverty, the poorer your working memory, and that link is largely explained by this chronic physiologic stress," Evans said. "We put these things together and can say the reason we get this link between poverty and deficits in working memory is this chronic elevated stress."

McEwen said the findings are consistent with earlier research in animals and brain imaging studies in people indicating that the body's response to stress, such as chronically elevated levels of cortisol, can adversely affect the brain, including the regions involved in working memory.

"This fits into a whole network of research," McEwen said. "It's a really exciting story."

Other researchers cautioned that more work is needed to explore and confirm the findings, and that chronic stress is probably one of the many factors affecting a child's development. But they said the results provided insight into the connection between poverty and achievement.

"One of the questions that health psychologists have been very interested in exploring is how is it that something outside the body literally gets under the skin and into the brain," said Avshalom Caspi, a professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University. "What this article says is that one of the reasons that poverty does make such an important difference is that it affects many physiological systems, and those systems, once stressed, may compromise brain development."

The findings indicate that education standards and other government policies that aim to improve poor children's performance in school should consider the stress they are experiencing at home, Evans said.

"It's not just 'Read to our kids and take them to the library,'" he said. "We need to take into account that chronic stress takes a toll not only on their health, but it may take a toll on their cognitive functioning."

Inhalant Abuse Among Youth

Continued from page 1

irreversible damage to vital organs such as the heart, liver, and kidneys; and even death.

Parents and teachers can work toward reducing inhalant abuse among young people by learning how to recognize inhalant abuse, and by educating youth about the dangers of inhalant abuse. Data published by the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition indicates that inhalant abusers are typically younger than other drug abusers.

Although there is not a typical profile of age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status among inhalant abusers, there are ways to recognize if someone you know is abusing inhalants. The Consumer Products Safety Commission says to look out for the following symptoms when checking for signs of inhalant abuse:

- Unusual breath odor or chemical odor on clothing.
- Slurred or disoriented speech.
- Drunk, dazed, or dizzy appearance.
- Signs of paint or other products where they would not normally be, such as on the face or fingers.
- Red or runny eyes or nose.
- Spots and/or sores around the mouth.
- Nausea and/or loss of appetite.

Chronic inhalant abusers may exhibit such symptoms as anxiety, excitability, irritability, or restlessness.

Teachers and parents can educate youth about the dangers of abusing inhalants. It's important to link inhalant abuse to safety concerns, but adults also need to be mindful of relying on scare tactics to keep youth away from these drugs. Education on the long- and short-term effects of inhaling toxic substances and clear-headed explanations of the risks of oxygen deprivation and dangers of environmental toxins will help youth understand why sniffing, huffing, and inhaling these substances could be exceedingly detrimental to their health.

The Web site www.inhalants.org has a number of resources for parents, teachers, community members, and youth who wish to find out more about inhalant abuse and how to keep their community safe.

I liked the event because I learned the truth in a fun way.



Power Source Parenting: Now Available to Address Emotional and Social Challenges Facing At-Risk Teen Parents

A new book released by the Lionheart Foundation, *Power Source Parenting: Growing Up Strong and Raising Healthy Kids*, is a hands-on parenting guide to address the social and emotional issues of high-risk teen parents. It is currently being piloted in youth development centers and parenting classes in Massachusetts and distributed free of charge to professionals across the country who serve young parents.

Free copies of *Power Source Parenting* are available to professionals who are working with pregnant or at-risk teen parents in a counseling capacity. For more information, see: lionheart.org/parenting/index

The Lionheart Foundation, PO Box 194, Back Bay, Boston, MA 02117

The volunteers are so committed to this experience and passionate about educating Teens on the choices they have in dealing with real world issues in a healthy and safe environment. I was most impressed with the 'de-briefing' or processing rooms at the very end of the maze.

For the eighth year, Teen Maze was fantastic - it just keeps getting better! Over 500 youth and close to 300 volunteers made this two day event educational and fun for the regional youth. Thank you to our community volunteers, youth and contributors.

It taught me a lot about life. It was a reality check.

Prescription Drug Abuse Among Youth

Continued from page 1

Painkillers such as Vicodin® and Oxycontin® are some of the most commonly abused prescription drugs, according to the National Youth Anti Drug Media Campaign. Anti-anxiety drugs and drugs used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are also commonly-abused prescription medications. Teens who are abusing prescription drugs may exhibit slurred speech, nausea, vomiting, and other external signs of drug abuse.

Parents can help reduce the amount of prescription drug abuse, first by talking with their teen about the risks of prescription drug abuse. Taking drugs without a doctor's approval can lead to addiction, serious medical problems, and in some cases death. Parents can restrict access to prescription drugs by placing them in secure cabinets or in spaces where teens do not have access to the drugs. If teens spend time at a relative's home, locking up or relocating their prescription drugs is also a good choice. Parents should be aware that prescription drugs are also available for purchase online, so if a teen has access to a credit card and the Internet, he or she could also be purchasing drugs on the Web.

Teens may turn to prescription drugs to appease a stressful life situation. If parents notice changes in their teens' moods or stress levels, they should be aware that stress and other life pressures can lead teenagers down the road of drug abuse. Parents who pay attention to events and changes in a student's life and have regular conversations with their teens are better prepared to address and prevent prescription drug abuse. Parents who need more information can always contact their child's physician, a school counselor, or the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-662-HELP to get a listing of treatment centers near them.

On the Net:

http://www.theantidrug.com/drug_info/prescription_dangers.asp#foot

<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/govpubs/prevalert/v6/4.aspx>

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Create a sidewalk mural in chalk

Go stargazing with a new friend

Tye-dye your bedsheets

Play mini-golf with an old friend

Have a campout in your backyard

Invite friends over for popcorn and games

Watch the sunrise or sunset

Write a song, a poem, a play, a story

Visit the library and sign up for the summer reading program - you might win something!

Go fishing or hiking - take a picnic

Sketch a flower or plant growing in your yard

Plant a small garden

Go for a bike ride

Play frisbee golf

Spread out a blanket and cloudwatch

Trade a book with a friend and read it

Make a new webpage or update your existing sites with a summer look

Have a watermelon seed spitting contest

Learn 5 new things about your grandfather

We Are Looking for Facilities to Join Our Hero of the Month Program!

Hero of the Month is a program that was started for children who are facing sad or extraordinary experiences and need something to lift their spirits. Your facility would nominate one child a month to be a hero and that child would receive a gift card from Wal-Mart ranging from \$200-500, depending on their age, as well as a t-shirt, medal and certificate. This program is at no cost to your facility; it's simply something we offer to help the kids. With facilities where confidentiality may be an issue, options are available to be discussed. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact Margo Carter for more information: 888-918-9004 margo@kidswishnetwork.org.

**Kids Wish Network
4060 Louis Ave
Holiday, FL 34691**

CALENDAR

Ongoing

Fatherhood Classes

5:30-8pm, Wednesdays

Training Annex at 105 E Arbecam, Cortez

May

- 18th Meth Action Committee Meeting**
10:30am, Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition Meeting
11:15am, Cortez Welcome Center
- 19th Public Input for Revisions of State Plan for Prevention, Intervention & Treatment Services for Children & Youth (2010-2013)**
10:00am-noon, Cortez Chamber of Commerce
The plan guides state departments in implementing innovative approaches. For more info (303)692-2421, j.esquibel@state.co.us or chele.clark@state.co.us
- 27th HORIZONS On Air TEEN MAZE Interview**
KSJD 8:30am
- Western Colorado Area Health Education Center Community Advocacy Project**
Durango
Regional Conversation with 3 speakers on children's healthcare and an audience poll with data to be sent to Governor Ritter
- 28th Parents Challenged by Substance Abuse Teleconference Training**
Part 1: Effective Motivational Interviewing Methods for Engaging Clients Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC
\$30 per 90-minute interactive seminar
For more info (510)643-8390 aiare@berkeley.edu

June

- 1st Montelores Early Childhood Coalition Meeting**
11:45am-2:00pm, Church of Christ Annex
Lunch included.
- 8-9th Health Integration Planning Meeting for CO Trust Grant MECC**
Location TBA
Monday 6:00pm-7:30pm, dinner included
Tuesday 7:30am-9:00am, breakfast included
- 10th Parents Challenged by Substance Abuse Teleconference Training**
Part 2: Strategies for Increasing Recovery Rates
Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC
\$30 per 90-minute interactive seminar
For more info (510)643-8390 aiare@berkeley.edu
- 15th Meth Action Committee Meeting**
10:30am, Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition Meeting
11:15am, Cortez Welcome Center

Early Childhood Network in Montezuma and Dolores Counties

By Greer Galloway, HORIZONS Editor

The Montelores Early Childhood Council (MECC) has grown and developed impressively, making it a valuable resource in the communities of Montezuma and Dolores Counties. The Council helps coordinate all of the area's childcare facilities and provides support to a variety of other organizations working with young children and their families.

"We are building a comprehensive early childhood system based on the strengths and needs of young children and their families in Montezuma and Dolores Counties," says Donna Wiese, who has served as the Coordinator of MECC for the past two years.

Under the guidance of Ms. Wiese, MECC has developed a comprehensive strategic plan with goals outlined for the next three years in the domains of early childhood health, mental health, parent support and education, and early childhood systems-building. A series of Family Forums has provided area families with an opportunity both to share their experiences and to actively participate in family surveys which have gathered valuable information for the area's organizations working with children and families. Forums have been held in Dolores, Mancos, and Cortez, and are planned for Towaoc and Dove Creek.

Ms. Wiese has helped MECC to form partnerships with many of the area's vital organizations, including the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Human Services, the Board of Cooperative Services, the School Community Youth Coalition, the Piñon Project Family Resource Center, the Prevention Project, and the Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center; as well as the Public School Districts, Public Libraries, Departments of Social Services, and Health Departments in Montezuma and Dolores Counties. In her time with MECC, she has also expanded funding to include grants from El Pomar, the Department of Social Services, and Colorado Trust.

Ms. Wiese emphasizes that the success of the coalition is a reflection of the hard work of many dynamic people from

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SUMMER 2009

Exciting Changes Taking Place at Montelores Early Childhood Council

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many different organizations. "The membership works really well as a team and *together* many good things have taken place in the last two years."

Donna's leadership has been fantastic, and many will be disappointed to see her moving on as she passes the Coordinator's baton to Vangi McCoy. Ms. McCoy's appointment was recently announced, and the reaction in the community has been "terrific," says Ms. Wiese.

Ms. McCoy currently works for both the Piñon Project Family Resource Center and Invest in Kids. She brings a wealth of experience with her, and her enthusiasm for children, families, and the community are unparalleled. Ms. McCoy will complete her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership this summer, just in time to use her new skills in the leadership of MECC. She attended Leadership Montezuma, has taught the Incredible Years Parenting Classes and other classroom programs for many years in the community. She also coaches teachers to improve the social/emotional component of their classrooms, is on the School Accountability Team for the local School Board, and teaches *Art of Possibility: the Art of Leadership*, a 5-part training for early childhood professionals across fields. Ms. McCoy also designed the series of Family Forums presented to the community by MECC this year. She will mentor with Ms. Wiese during the month of July and then begin in her new Coordinator position August 1.

Ms. McCoy will, no doubt, continue to lead in the endeavors that the Council and Ms. Wiese began: "We are building a comprehensive early childhood system based on the strengths and needs of young children and their families in Montezuma and Dolores Counties. We are listening to what families are saying and we are planning *with* them, not *for* them."

**FOR MORE
UPCOMING EVENTS
AND REGULAR
UPDATES, VISIT
scycnews.blogspot.com**

CALENDAR

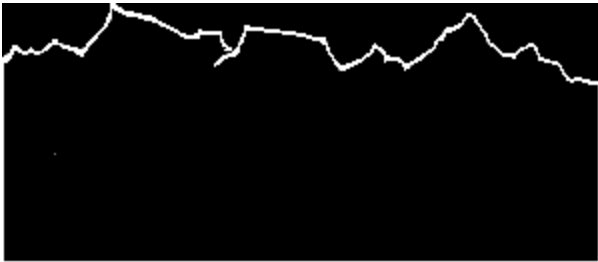
June (cont')

- 15-19th **Middle School Technology Skills Camp**
8:00am-12:00pm daily San Juan Basin Technical College.
\$25. For more info call 565-8457
- 23rd **Promoting Growth & Change in Highly Resistant Clients Teleconference Training**
Part 1: Preventing or Resolving Client Resistance Clifton Mitchell, PhD
\$30 per 90-minute interactive seminar
For more info (510)643-8390 aiare@berkeley.edu
- 23-25th **Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training**
8:30-4:30 daily Pueblo, CO
\$75 per participant
For more info, rps@omni.org or rpscolorado.org
- 24th **HORIZONS On Air**
Connecting listeners to resources in Montezuma County
KSJD 8:30am

July

- 8th **Promoting Growth & Change in Highly Resistant Clients Teleconference Training**
Part 2: Managing Critical Junctures in the Counseling Dialogue Clifton Mitchell, PhD
\$30 per 90-minute interactive seminar
For more info (510)643-8390 aiare@berkeley.edu
- 8-11th **MOST Of Us 2009 Montana Summer Institute for Social Norms Practitioners: Positive Community Norms** with Jeff Linkenbach
Bozeman, MT
For more info, visit mostofus.org/institute
- 20th **Meth Action Committee Meeting**
10:30am at Cortez Welcome Center
School Community Youth Coalition
11:15am at Cortez Welcome Center
Target Tobacco Coalition Meeting
12-1:30pm, Cortez Welcome Center
For more info, call Julia 565-3056 ext 233
- 22nd **HORIZONS On Air**
Connecting listeners with resources in Montezuma County
KSJD 8:30am
- 27-30th **Mid-Year Training Camp**
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
The only intensive coalition-specific training opportunity of its kind, providing in-depth courses on everything from coalition fundamentals to evaluation and research.
For more information, go to cadca.org

HORIZONS is funded by state Title V funds through Montezuma County Partners and the Target Tobacco Coalition. Focused on issues related to supporting healthy lifestyle choices for the youth of Dolores and Montezuma counties, please send submissions including: calendar items, health news, ideas, and corrections to info@scycinc.org



CHARACTER CHOICES

May

Be a person of good character by showing

HONOR

Respect others because of the higher authorities they represent;
avoid being disrespectful.

June

Be a person of good character by promoting

JUSTICE

Take personal responsibility to uphold what is pure, right, and true;
avoid being corrupt.

July

Be a person of good character by practicing

GENTLENESS

Show consideration and personal concern for others;
avoid being harsh.

*Provided by the Character Council
www.characterfirst.com*

HORIZONS

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Cortez, CO. 81321

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