



# PRAIRIE RIDGE

## PREVENTION SERVICES

**"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"**

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## Newsletter

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### National Rx Take Back Day

This Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> is National Prescription Drug Take-Back day. Although synthetic drugs like K2 and "bath salts" are in the news a lot lately, it is the non-medical use of prescription medications that has taken second place behind alcohol in the spectrum of problematic drug use. Marijuana had been in second place for decades and will continue to vie for that slot in some areas, however if we look at the country as a whole, more people are using prescription drugs in a non-medical fashion than are using marijuana. Problematic use is proportional to availability; this is a simple explanation for the second place swap.

Most of us have some unused prescription drugs in our medicine cabinet. This would explain the source for much of the medicine used in a non-medical fashion. Not a Mexican drug cartel, not a Columbian drug lord, but rather the millions of medicine cabinets filled with unused pain relief and anti-anxiety drugs.

Reducing availability is a straight forward prevention strategy that works, but the recommendations for disposing of prescription drugs have been confusing, even to pharmacists. Flush, don't flush, put in the garbage, don't put in the garbage. With over 3,000 prescription drugs in the U.S. it would be unreasonable to expect the public to know the proper disposal protocol for each drug. What would be ideal would be one consistent, convenient, safe place for prescription drug disposal within each county.

We are on the cusp of having such disposal sites here in North Iowa. The Mitchell County Sheriff's department has been the first department in the area to put a protocol in place for taking back prescription drugs during normal business hours. The Winnebago County Sheriff, Lake Mills Police and Forest City Police are currently working out the logistics for becoming drop off sites. The Cerro Gordo County Sheriff is considering the same thing. Substance abuse coalitions in other counties in North Iowa are preparing to invite their local law enforcement to consider providing this valuable public service.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration only allows law enforcement agencies to take back drugs if they have the potential for abuse or addiction. Encourage your local substance abuse prevention coalition and local law enforcement agency to make local, convenient, consistent drug take-back a reality in your county. Although it can always be said that no one prevention effort is *the answer*, the goal of National Drug Take-Back Day is one step closer to creating healthier, safer communities with lower health care, insurance and tax costs, but we need to do it one step at a time. For more information you can visit <http://www.nationaltakebackday.com/>

**National Alcohol Awareness  
Month  
April 2011**

**National Rx Take Back Day  
April 30, 2011**



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## Change

Editorial by Jay Pedelty, CPS

I think I am not alone in coming to the realization that change is the norm for us, but we resist it as individuals and as cultures. An example of how a culture can resist change is with rules. Rules stabilize, but they also stagnate. They can protect us, but they can also endanger us. As we learn, we need to change the rules to reflect what we have learned if we don't, the rules will become the anchor that pulls us down. No where is this more apparent than with the rules we have made to deal with alcohol. In thinking about this, let's not even consider the words good or bad, or right or wrong, but rather the words realistic, responsive, and proactive.

In our country, alcohol is regulated by the Treasury department. Historically, alcohol tax was a major source of revenue for a fledgling federal government. Now the approximate \$10 billion dollars in federal revenue pales in comparison to the \$185 billion dollar cost of problematic alcohol use every year. Considering that alcohol is ingested, it must be either a food or a drug, so let's change the rules and give the food and drug administration regulatory authority over alcohol. This is a change, not an addition.

Another example would be the result of universal outrage when discovering that there was alcohol for sale in the air traffic controllers' building. They are, after all, responsible for the lives of hundreds of people. This is true of anyone though, we are all responsible for the lives of hundreds of people when we drive down the highway and yet alcohol is available at virtually every place we have to go to buy gas for our cars. It might be argued that this is fundamentally contrary to our public safety. If we made a rule that allows alcohol to be sold in convenience stores, one like your Iowa legislature voted on to expand the type of alcohol sold in convenience stores, we can also make a rule that prohibits it. This is a change, not an addition.

No matter what you're selling, the heavy user is your best customer. It follows that advertising promotes and creates heavy use. If it didn't, there wouldn't be advertising as we know it today. Copious amounts of research show a direct correlation between the amounts of alcohol advertising people are exposed to and the amount of underage drinking and problematic alcohol use they experience.

My proposal is this; let's change the rules, like we did with cigarette advertising. It would be a change that is certainly demonstrated success in reducing certain behaviors. Rules in and of themselves are not the ultimate answer to reducing the cost of problematic alcohol use, but changing the rules and our minds, is a sign that we are learning from our experience.

## April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol Awareness Month was founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) in 1987. It encourages communities to reach out to the public with information about alcohol and alcoholism as a chronic, progressive disease.

Alcohol is a powerful, mood altering drug that is most frequently used by Americans. Each and every one of us is either directly or indirectly affected by this public health issue.

Alcohol is aggressively marketed to underage drinkers and heavily associated with social events that are popular with high school and college students.

Over the past two decades, scientific research has revolutionized our understanding of how drugs affect the brain and that prolonged drug and alcohol use can result in long lasting changes in brain structure and function.

Please join us in celebrating NCADD's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Alcohol Awareness Month. This year's open-ended theme "One Too Many..." will highlight the impact that alcohol and alcohol-related problems have on individuals, on families, and children, in the workplace and our communities.

If you are interested in starting grassroots activities to celebrate or simply want more information you can visit: <http://ncadd.org/> or contact Prairie Ridge Prevention Services.



## Upcoming Events

**May 14, 2011 Youth Diversion Program** at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. *The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday.*

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

**May 14 & 16, 2011 Adolescent Prime for Life** at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. *The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday & Monday 4:00-8:00 p.m.*

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.