

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 9, 2014
10 a.m. EDT

Contact: NIDA Press Office
301-443-6245
media@nida.nih.gov

National Drug Facts Week 2015 to begin January 26
NIH observance links teens with scientific experts

National Drug Facts Week, which brings together teens and scientific experts to shatter persistent myths about drug use and addiction, will be held Jan. 26 through Feb. 1, 2015. Ideas for community-based events, as well as success stories from previous years, are highlighted on the [National Drug Facts Week](#) Web portal. Last year, more than 1,000 events were held with teens throughout all states, and several internationally. The fifth National Drug Facts Week is sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which is part of the National Institutes of Health.



“National Drug Facts Week has been growing every year, from 92 events at its inception almost five years ago,” said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. “This tells us how much teens - who are bombarded daily with misinformation about drugs - want science-based facts about drug use.”



Dr. Nora Volkow describes National Drug Facts Week

National Drug Facts Week was launched in 2010 to counteract the myths that teens often hear from the Internet, TV, movies, music, or friends. One popular myth is that marijuana is harmless, although science tells us that marijuana use by teens may negatively affect brain development and impair school and athletic performance. Teen use of marijuana is up compared to five years ago, perhaps because fewer teens consider marijuana to be a harmful drug.

To help shatter the myths surrounding marijuana and other addictive substances, National Drug Facts Week encourages events that allow teens to ask questions of addiction scientists or health experts about drug use and addiction. Events can be sponsored by a variety of organizations, including schools, community groups, sports clubs, and hospitals. Topics for discussion can include not only what science tells us about marijuana, but also about prescription drug abuse, and the use of tobacco and alcohol.

NIDA provides an online toolkit that advises teens and their adult advisors how to create an event, publicize it, find an expert, and obtain scientific information on drugs. This year, NIDA

has merged its National Drug Facts Week website with its popular NIDA for Teens site, <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week>. This will enable easier browsing between event planning tools and NIDA's drug information fact sheets, which are designed with teen-friendly language and graphics. Event holders who register online will receive free booklets with science-based facts about drugs, including one of NIDA's most in-demand teen publications, *Drugs: Shatter the Myths*. Also this year, NIDA offers three interactive tools that can be projected on large screens at events or used with mobile devices:

- The online 2015 National Drug IQ Challenge is a 12-question multiple choice quiz that teens and adults can take to test their knowledge about drugs. Past-year challenges can be found here: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/quiz/national-drug-facts-week/take-iq-challenge/2014>. The 2015 challenge will be posted when it is available.
- Choose Your Path interactive videos encourage students to make decisions about the abuse of prescription drugs using scenarios from their everyday lives: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/peerx/choose-your-path>.
- The interactive version of the popular poster *Drugs + Your Body: It Isn't Pretty* highlights the effects drugs have on the teen body. It was created in partnership with Scholastic: <http://www.scholastic.com/drugs-and-your-body/>.

National Drug Facts Week is again supported by many federal agencies, including the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at NIH; the Office of Safe and Healthy Students in the U.S. Department of Education; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in the Department of Health and Human Services; the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in the U.S. Department of Justice; and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (HUD). Each agency will post National Drug Facts Week information on its website and encourage the development of special events linking experts to teens.

“President Obama’s vision is for all of America’s children to grow up in healthy and safe communities,” said ONDCP Acting Director Michael Botticelli. “This administration’s drug policy is based on neuroscience, and we are committed to informing young people and health care professionals about the negative consequences drug and alcohol use can have on their futures.”

The Office of Safe and Healthy Students will help promote National Drug Facts Week and encourage schools to participate. “National Drug Facts Week allows NIDA staff to connect directly with youth and to share facts on drug use in a direct, evidence-based, and non-judgmental fashion,” said David Esquith, director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students. “Once again, our office is pleased to help promote this week’s activities and to encourage schools to participate.”

DEA will again share in efforts to encourage community-based events. “National Drug Facts Week provides a unique opportunity to discuss drug abuse, relevant science, and the dangers of addiction. DEA is proud to encourage community-based events that engage teens in a dialogue about drugs,” said DEA Administrator Michele M. Leonhart. “Having an honest and open discussion about the dangers of drug abuse is a significant first step in drug prevention. We are pleased to support NIDA’s efforts to help youth make informed choices.”

HUD, which reaches approximately 1.5 million families globally, is participating by encouraging executive and field office public housing directors to hold National Drug Facts Week events and by promoting the week-long observance through Facebook.

Also during National Drug Facts Week, NIDA scientists will hold their annual Web chat with teens around the country. Drug Facts Chat Day will be held Jan. 30 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time. Further details on the popular annual chat, including registration information and transcripts from previous years, can be found at <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week/chat-with-scientists>.

Organizations with questions about National Drug Facts Week can e-mail NIDA at drugfacts@nida.nih.gov. Event organizers can register events starting today at <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week/register>.

###

The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at www.drugabuse.gov, which is now compatible with your smartphone, iPad or tablet. To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's DrugPubs research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or drugpubs@nida.nih.gov. Online ordering is available at <http://drugpubs.drugabuse.gov>. NIDA's media guide can be found at <http://drugabuse.gov/mediaguide/>, and its new easy-to-read website can be found at www.easyread.drugabuse.gov.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

NIH...Turning Discovery Into Health[®]