

# Monthly Columns

by Attorney General Jack Conway



## July 2010

There are some frightening statistics I'd like to share with Kentuckians. One in five teenagers in grades 9-12 has abused a prescription medication at least once in their lives. And according to the Partnership for a Drug Free America, every day 2,500 teens use a prescription drug to get high for the first time.

As a father and as Kentucky's Attorney General, I am alarmed by these statistics. That's why I have made combating the scourge of prescription drug abuse a top priority. Even facing budget cuts of almost 30 percent, I have devoted additional resources to fight this epidemic and created Kentucky's only statewide prescription drug diversion task force to increase our investigations of drug trafficking, overprescribing physicians, doctor shopping and illegal out-of-state pharmacies. However, we cannot fight this problem alone - we need Kentucky parents to join with us to help keep illegal prescription drugs out of our communities and schools.

With easy access to prescription medications, kids today are becoming drug addicts right in their own homes. Fatal drug overdoses in Kentucky have doubled over the past five years. This epidemic is robbing our state of far too many good kids, like 19-year-old Sarah Shay and 22-year-old Savannah Kissick, both of Morehead. Their mothers, Dr. Karen Shay and Lynn Kissick, have pledged to work with me to educate parents about the devastating consequences of prescription drug abuse.

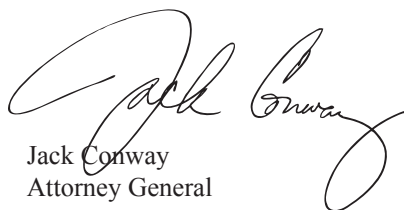
I am also working closely with the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, Kentucky Pharmacists Association, National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI) and Operation UNITE, among other agencies, to further educate Kentucky parents on how they can stop this deadly problem before it starts. We'll announce more information about this important public awareness campaign this fall.

Three simple steps can help keep Kentucky kids safer:

- **Monitor** and keep track of how many pills are in each of your prescription bottles, as well as your refills. If you find you need to refill your prescriptions more often than expected that could indicate a problem.
- **Secure** all prescription medications. Treat these items like jewelry or cash and store them in a safe place out of reach of children and teens.
- **Dispose** of expired or unused prescription drugs.

I encourage Kentuckians to take advantage of an upcoming statewide prescription drug take-back initiative. On September 25, my office will partner with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other local law enforcement agencies to ensure the safe and proper disposal of unneeded prescription medications. For more information on this event, visit [ag.ky.gov](http://ag.ky.gov) or simply follow us on Facebook([www.facebook.com/kyagconway](http://www.facebook.com/kyagconway)) or Twitter [@kyoag](https://twitter.com/kyoag) to stay informed on this and the many other important initiatives from my office.

Working together, we are making Kentucky a safer place to live, work and raise a family.



Jack Conway  
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