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**ROSECRANCE AND CHICAGO'S DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT SPONSOR  
CLEAN OUT YOUR MEDICINE CABINET DAY ON OCTOBER 13**

*Proper Disposal of Drugs Critical To Combat Prescription and OTC Drug Abuse  
Rapid Growth in Prescription Drug Abuse by Chicago Area Teens*

Rosecrance Health Network, a leading provider of substance abuse treatment to adolescents, adults and their families, said today it is partnering with Chicago's Department of Environment on an area wide "Clean out Your Medicine Cabinet" day to encourage families to properly dispose of unwanted and unneeded prescription and over-the-counter medicines that could be misused or abused.

"Abuse and addictions to prescription drugs like OxyContin, vicodin, percocet, valium, or xanax and over the counter drugs like cough syrup are growing at an alarming rate," said Thomas E. Wright, M.D., medical director of adolescent services at Rosecrance, which serves teenage patients from throughout Illinois. "Teens sometimes think these drugs are safe because they are prescriptions prescribed by a physician. But the main reason for the abuse is that these drugs are easily accessible and free. Adolescents find these drugs in the safety of their homes, or while visiting their grandparents or friends. They are just sitting there waiting to be used," Dr. Wright said.

Between the ages of 13 and 16, the abuse of prescription drugs increases significantly, according to Rosecrance admissions data. Incidents of first use of prescription opiates (such as Demerol, codeine or Vicodin) by teenagers nearly double during this time period, sedative or tranquilizer use (including Xanax, Valium or Ambien) increased at even a faster rate five times and over-the counter drug abuse show the same amount of increase. The National Monitoring the Future study from the University of Michigan reported that over 40% of older teens say that these types of prescription drugs are "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain. National trends indicate about 19 percent of teens have tried prescription medicine to get high, based on the 2005 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study which surveyed teenagers in 7th through 12th grades.

"Cutting off the supply of these drugs will play an enormous role in tackling this problem," Dr. Wright explained. "In addition parents have the responsibility to make sure their children understand that using prescription drugs intended for someone else is neither safe nor legal. These drugs – which can be

(more)

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found in anyone's medicine cabinet because they are drugs which have a legitimate and appropriate use -- can also be addicting and deadly."

To assist with the proper removal of drugs from their homes, Chicago's Department of Environment is sponsoring a one day drop off center on October 13 where residents from throughout Illinois will have the ability to dispose of those medicines that are not being used or are outdated.

"Remember the bottle of 30 Vicodin you got when you sprained your ankle playing soccer two years ago? It's time to throw it out," said Larry Merritt, title, Chicago Department of Environment. "Those outdated prescription cough syrups -- time to go.

"We want you to be able to get rid of these drugs properly -- not flushing them down the toilet where they can contaminate the water supply or throwing them in the garbage where they might become a drug source for somebody else," Merritt said. "Participating in our drug disposal program is the most effective way to clean out your medicine cabinet, protect your children and also protect the environment."

In those families where prescription and over-the-counter drugs are being used properly, it is important for parents to keep them in a secure place and to make sure cough syrup levels aren't suddenly declining too rapidly, or pill bottle aren't emptying too quickly.

Details on the clean out day:

Saturday, October 13th

8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Northeastern Illinois University

5500 N. St. Louis

Chicago, IL

For more information call:

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### **About Rosecrance**

Rosecrance Health Network is a leading provider of inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment services for adolescents and adults. For more information please call 1-800-ALCOHOL or visit [www.rosecrance.org](http://www.rosecrance.org).