

Drug abuse forum invites parents, students



Jessica Boisclair/Daily Times

A forum will be held at Coventry High School on Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m. to raise awareness and help prevent substance abuse.

Prescription drugs a growing problem across the nation

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COVENTRY- A forum will be held to raise awareness and inform parents about the ever growing substance abuse problem in high schools across the nation.

Principle Michael Hobin and his administration team have been noticing an increase in the number of students partaking in substance abuse, especially on a high school level.

He said that discussions were held last summer to find ways to educate students and their parents about the dangers of substance abuse, particularly prescription drugs.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website, prescription drug abuse is becoming a nation wide problem.

It also states that Rhode Island has the fourth highest abuse rate in the country.

Hobin explained that the number of students being sent to the nurses' office for being seemingly impaired has increased.

Most of the time a teacher will radio the school nurse about any signs of an impaired student.

In turn, he said, the nurse will then evaluate the student as to whether the cause is drugs or alcohol.

Unfortunately with prescription drugs, he said that it can be challenging to know what exactly a child has taken.

He said that the event, which has received positive responses from parents, will hopefully help inform them about the growing abuse throughout the country and what signs to look for.

Alongside Hobin, Assistant Principle Susan Chandler has helped plan the upcoming conference.

Chandler explained that the issue of prescription drug abuse is growing larger and that most schools are starting to brainstorm ways for prevention.

"This is not just a school issue but a community issue," she said. "We know we need to tackle it."

She said that an invitation was extended to schools in West Warwick and other neighboring schools to join the Nov. 10 conference.

The administration has put together a panel of experts to

answer any questions parents or students may have about the issue during the conference.

Chandler said the panel consists of an array of different people including: a Brown medical school student, a school psychologist, a recovering addict, parents with kids who suffer from addiction problems, police, emergency medical technician, clinical therapist, and nurses.

Along with the panel, she said that the local police department will bring in certain drug paraphernalia that parents may not be aware of in order to bring light to some parents.

Chandler said that the administration hopes to be able to answer all of the questions parents have and to inform them about how to identify when a child has a substance abuse problem and any signs that may be visible.

She said they hope out of the panel available that any and all issues can be addressed.

"We're so hopeful that people will come and feel relaxed and find out information so they can help anybody who seems to need it," she explained.

The conference will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday at Coventry High School.