

A communication periodical for our clients, staff & the community at large

# The Chronicle

A Paterson Counseling Center Newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- Did You Know PCC's Advocacy For Treatment Extends Into The College Community Through Case Studies and Examination of Real World Practicum
- PCC Participates in Community Outreach Initiatives
- PCC Is A Private Facility With State Sponsored Partnerships
- PCC Has A Progressive Phased Based System

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## Prescription Drug Abuse & Our Children

More than one in four insured children are now reported to regularly take prescription medication in the U.S. Credit: Getty Images

Prescription drug use in American children rose by 5 percent in 2009, the highest of any other single demographic group, and nearly four times higher than the overall population, according to the [2010 Drug Trend Report](#) compiled by [Medco Health Solutions](#), a provider of pharmacy benefit plans and the largest mail order pharmacy operation in the U.S.

The report, which looks at prescription spending, found that more than one in four insured children are now taking at least one prescription medication to treat a chronic medical condition. The figure is even higher -- nearly 30 percent -- for adolescents aged 10 to 19.

The most significant increases over the past nine years have been seen in the use of antipsychotic, diabetes, and asthma drugs. Strikingly, the number of children 19 and younger using type 2 diabetes medications has risen by more than 150 percent since 2001, with adolescent girls increasing by an incredible 200 percent. Type 2 diabetes -- once known as adult onset diabetes -- is linked to obesity and physical inactivity, according to [The Obesity Society](#), with nearly 90 percent of people with the condition reported to be overweight. When you consider the growing epidemic of obesity in the U.S., the dramatic rise in this class of medications is not surprising.



The report also links obesity to the higher rates of hypertension and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) in young people, with accompanying increases in the categories of drugs that treat those conditions. GERD is a disorder in which stomach acid and digestive enzymes flow backwards into the esophagus, the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach, frequently causing heartburn. Though studies have determined that obesity drives GERD symptoms in children, researchers have not pinpointed

## Prescription Drug Abuse Continued

exactly why.

During the nine-year period, from 2001 to 2009, use of hypertensives to treat high blood pressure in children was reported to be up by 17 percent – 29 percent in boys aged 10 to 19 – and use of proton pump inhibitors used to treat heartburn and GERD increased by 147 percent over the same period.

"The fact that one in three adolescents are being treated for a chronic condition points to the need for additional health education and lifestyle changes that can address the obesity issue that is likely a driving force behind such conditions as type 2 diabetes and even asthma," Dr. Robert S. Epstein, Medco's chief medical officer and president of the Medco Research Institute, says in a news release on Medco's website. Asthma drug use grew by 5 percent in 2009, and 42 percent since 2001, confirming the continuing [rise in childhood asthma](#) that has been seen in recent years.



Use of [atypical antipsychotic drugs](#) in children doubled since 2001, and it has more than doubled in adolescent girls. Atypical antipsychotics are powerful medications traditionally used to treat schizophrenia, but Medco reports they are now prescribed increasingly for other conditions, including depression and anxiety. Use of these drugs has been associated with significant weight gain and increased risk of type 2 diabetes, leading experts to question their use in the pediatric population.

Perhaps this is countered by the 23 percent decrease since 2004 reported in the use of antidepressants by youth, which the Medco report attributes to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's warnings of the increased risk of suicidal thoughts in children using these drugs.

"Looking at children was the real shocker for us," Dr. Robert Epstein, Medco's chief medical officer, said on a conference call from Medco's drug trend symposium in Orlando, Fla.

Clearly, the news points to a disturbing trend in child health, and Medco says that the increases in prescription drug use by children for chronic conditions could fuel significantly higher health care costs as those young patients enter adulthood. Source: Parentdish.com

## Paterson Counseling Center's Community Open House

Paterson Counseling Center's Annual Open House is coming soon. The open house presents an opportunity for the center to reach out to residents of the city and engage them on the activities underway in the center and the outcomes realized for the year from a treatment perspective. It also offers the community an opportunity to express concerns or share relevant insight into activities taking place in local neighborhoods, as well.

This grass roots activity has been a mainstay at the center and is part of a holistic process of obtaining feedback and identifying opportunities for improvement and outreach strategies across the city. Please call the center at 973-523-8316 if you are interested in attending or participating in the community Open House at PCC.