

SILVER THREADS

Misuse of prescription drugs is a problem for all generations

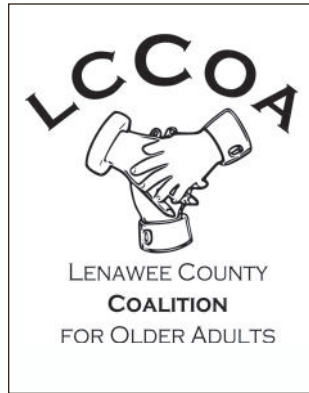
By Beth Wood

According to a recent University of Michigan study one in 10 teens and young adults admitted to misusing prescription painkillers and sedatives. More than 85 percent of them did not have a prescription for the drugs.

So, where did these young people get these medications? Unfortunately, many kids find these medications right in the medicine cabinets of their own homes, or the homes of relatives.

As more and more households become multi-generational, older adults need to be specifically educated on the dangers of prescription drug use in teens. The National Institute on Drug Abuse defines prescription drug abuse as "someone taking a medication that was prescribed for someone else or takes their own prescription in a way not intended by a doctor." It has become a big issue because of the dangers of taking medication for reasons other than health.

For teens, it is a growing problem. After marijuana



and alcohol, prescription drugs are the most commonly abused substances by children age 14 and older. Teens abuse prescription drugs for a number of reasons, such as getting high, stopping pain, or because they think it will help them concentrate for school or homework.

Most teens obtain prescription drugs they abuse from friends and relatives, most often without the person knowing. When abused, taken in different amounts, or used for different purposes than as prescribed, these medications can affect the brain and body in ways very similar to illicit drugs.

To learn more about this

growing problem, all generations are invited to a free program at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, in the library at Adrian Middle School 7/8, 615 Springbrook Ave. Leigh Jameson-Heise from the Community Action Agency will speak on the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse. We especially encourage older adults who are living with and/or caring for children under 18 to attend. Children are also welcome to attend and refreshments will be provided.

The presentation is sponsored by the Lenawee Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, Region 2 Area Agency on Aging and the Lenawee Department on Aging. To reserve a seat please contact me, Beth Mehan-Wood, at the Department on Aging, at 264-5280.

Beth Wood is a case coordinator and support person for the Lenawee Department on Aging. The Silver Threads column is a project of the Lenawee County Coalition for Older Adults.