

**NIPC INHALANT UPDATE
ALERT**

Greetings:

This NIPC UPDATE will be brief. We wanted to touch on a couple of very significant issues that cannot wait for a full-blown UPDATE to go out. We have also placed this on our web site, <http://www.inhalants.org> at the “important items section.”

UPDATES are the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition’s (NIPC’s) electronic newsletters dealing with inhalant use & abuse issues that we hope you will circulate among colleagues and friends. This issue will include:

A WARNING from the “Ohio Early Warning Network” on the potentially fatal dangers of youth taking Ritalin in conjunction with huffing correctional fluid;

A CALL TO ACTION because the latest Scooby Doo movie has a character huffing nitrous from a whipped cream can for “fun;”

National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW) update;

The emergence of Families & Friends of Inhalant Victims Advocacy Group; and

NIPC web site redesign.

As you read this UPDATE, keep in mind that inhalant use is on the rise for 6th & 8th graders while there is a significant erosion of perceptions of inhalant risk and danger among this same group. This is a time for increased education and awareness efforts if we want to reverse these trends. We have a great opportunity at hand.

HUFFING & TAKING RITALIN – A DEADLY COMBINATION:

(PLEASE CIRCULATE THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION)

During National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW), the Ohio Early Warning Network issued an Alert to inform and warn people of the potentially fatal effects of huffing products such as correctional fluid while taking Ritalin.

According to Dr. Earl Siegel, Co-Director, Drug & Poison Information Center, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, “I would be primarily and most concerned about a potential fatal interaction whereas the Ritalin having a

‘sympathomimetic’ effect or adrenalin like effect which could enhance the possibility of Sudden Sniffing Death in the individual huffing the correctional fluid. There is the risk of sudden death with every episode of inhalant use. It could happen on the first incident or any one after. Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome occurs when the inhaled substance sensitizes the heart muscle to the body’s own ‘adrenaline’ leading to a fatal heart rhythm disturbance.” We have placed the full text of the Alert on our web site at <http://www.inhalants.org> under the “important news” section. A Cincinnati Post news story about this can be found at <http://www.cincypost.com/2004/03/25/drugs032504.html>.

As an aside, many of the parents who contact us about a huffing child also indicate that they are taking Ritalin. For those who have lost a child to inhalants, would you mind telling me if your child was also taking Ritalin (sorry to be so blunt)?

CALL TO ACTION: SCOOBY DOO BLUNDERS:

(At the end of this NIPC Alert I have attached some emailed comments)

What in the world were they thinking? Reports are coming into the NIPC that the new Warner Brothers’, PG rated, Scooby Doo movie, “Scooby-Doo 2, Monsters Unleashed,” has a scene with Shaggy huffing nitrous oxide from a whipped cream can for “fun” (one Mom told me she saw this in the movie’s trailer on a Saturday morning during a cartoon TV show, see link below). On March 26th, the Saint Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press newspaper reported “... but they still can’t resist having Shaggy huff spray-can fumes ...”

See the trailer and tell me what you think. Go to this site and click on “Under the Weather”: <http://movies.yahoo.com/shop?d=hv&id=1808412521&cf=trailer>

Tell you the truth – I am speechless! I have not seen the movie (nor had I intended to, up to now) so I cannot directly comment. In the past when something like this happened (usually a TV commercial), we would hold off on a call to action until we had actually seen the offensive piece. This time it is different. This is something we must address now.

Many of you have taken an activist role when companies have run nitrous or helium sniffing ads – this time it is more critical than ever to get involved and be heard. Just think about the target audience for this PG rated movie and the message that is going out to kids – it is cute, funny and ok to huff! In the last six weeks there were six youngsters who died after huffing – that’s not ok or cute.

We must have our concerns heard to keep our youth safe. If we work toward greater awareness with combined voices, people who create movies and advertisements will finally understand that there is nothing funny or cute about huffing.

What can we do? In partnership with the Compressed Gas Association (see <http://www.cganet.com> for background and additional nitrous information), the NIPC believes that the immediate goal is to raise awareness about our concerns and the implications of the movie's message and about the dangers of inhalant use in general. We should urge Warner Brothers to remove or edit this scene before it goes to DVD and video and provide inhalant prevention educational materials at theaters and with future DVD's and videos. If a specific brand of canned whipping cream can be observed in the movie then the manufacturer may have paid for this product placement. If this is the case, the manufacturer should be called to task for their approval of using their product this way or for not paying attention to how their product is being used. Let's hope no tragedies occur as a result of this scene.

We urge you write, call and email all parties involved to express your concerns – get friends and colleagues to do the same. Contact local and especially national media outlets and let them know your concerns and encourage them to do stories. Although I have pointed a finger at certain monoliths, our efforts should not be about blame – but about educating. Did the folks who were involved in this movie intend to do something wrong or inappropriate? I think not. This is an opportunity to educate many communities and publics about the dangers of inhalant use. As we all know, inhalants are not on the top of the awareness list, except during NIPAW or after a tragic death. Maybe this is not Warner Brother's fault but rather mine or ours for not pushing hard enough (I don't hear about coke use in PG rated movies). This is a particularly good time for an inhalant education effort as a follow-up to National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW). Our efforts should be to advance people's understanding about the dangers of inhalant use so they are recognized as a broad public health issue.

One contact person to write and/or call is Richard D. Parsons, Chairman of the Board (if you write, "cc" local and national media). Contact information:

Richard D. Parsons
Chairman of the Board
Chief Executive Officer
One Time Warner Plaza
New York, New York 10019

(212) 484-8100

If I can be of help, let me know (email or call me at 800/269-4237). If you decide to take action, let me know so I can track this (in the past, when we've had to do this, we have heard back from the offending organization, "almost nobody has contacted about this.").

FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF INHALANT VICTIMS MOVING TOWARD REALITY:

In our last NIPC UPDATE we mentioned the idea of establishing a grassroots advocacy group to raise awareness about inhalants and provide family support. This idea is coming to reality.

A number of people who have lost children and friends (as well as former abusers) who have been touched by inhalants have contacted us saying they want to be part of this effort. One person has volunteered to chair the group and it looks like we may have some initial seed money to get this off the ground and for a first meeting.

Please contact me if you want to join in this effort – we will make a difference with this. Also, we would like to set up a web based memorial section on our web site. If you have placed information about the death of a loved one or your personal story about your inhalant involvement on the web, let us know and we will link to it.

NATIONAL INHALANTS & POISONS AWARENESS WEEK – A SUCCESS:

March 18th marked the kick off for the 12th annual National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week (NIPAW) campaign at the National Press Club, in Washington, DC. Speakers included: John Walters, ONDCP Director, Charles Curie, SAMHSA Administrator, Nora Volkow, NIDA Director, Steve Pasierb, PDFA President & CEO, Jane Maxwell, Gulf Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center Research Professor, Marissa & Kim Manlove. Indiana parents who lost their child to huffing and me. The news conference can be seen at NCADI's web site at <http://ww.health.org> then either click on "Multimedia," or National Inhalants & Poisons Awareness Week, then to streaming audio & video, or Millions Risk their Lives by Using Inhalants and then click on the news conference. We garnered significant media coverage which can be seen at <http://www.news.google>

and search by “inhalants,” then sort by date. The guidelines for medical examiners, coroners and pathologists for determining inhalant deaths, which was released at the news conference, can be found at our web site under new items.

Organizations and individuals throughout the country participated in the campaign. Information about local activities is coming in – and a great deal was and is going on. We would like to hear from you about your activities and get copies of news clips of any coverage you had. Please email or fax (512/477-3932) us with information about your activities during NIPAW.

NIPC WEB SITE (<http://www.inhalants.org>):

For those of you who haven't visited our web site recently – please take a look. It has been redesigned, updated and new information has been added – including public service announcements that can be downloaded.

We want to set up a memorial section for our web site. For those of you who have lost a loved one to inhalants and have your memorial story on the web, let us know so we can link to it.

NIPC SUPPORT:

Our current contract year is almost over and we are awaiting renewal support. Unfortunately we have learned that our new funding, should we receive it, will be reduced by about 40%. If you have ever thought about making a contribution to us, now is the time. Those of you who received our materials at no cost, please think about making a contribution (the expenses for video dubbing and the mailing of the videos and brochures and for most of our phone service, among other things, come from my own pocket because we have no budget for this). The NIPC is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit corporation. **Help us continue to help others by making a contribution to *Synergies*. Mail to: NIPC/Synergies, 2904 Kerbey Lane, Austin, TX 78703.**

Speaking of donations, though not related to us (and off message) but something I do personally, I would like to suggest a way of making a difference to people in your community. Many of us travel about the country. Most motels & hotels give us those “lovely” little bathroom items, soap, shampoo, etc., that we use and other times don't. Items that go unopened I collect (I must admit I cheat a bit and gather these items daily so the hotel has to replace the supply each day) and donate to a women's shelter, Room at the Inn in Chattanooga, TN. I know these basics of life

are much appreciated. Think about doing the same in your community – if you do not have a place to donate these items, just send them to me. I'll see to it that they make their way to people who will use them. So many things we take for granted can make quite a difference in the lives of others.

My friends, there is much more to say, but I wanted to get this out quickly. I will be working on a new UPDATE. Remember, spread the word about the potential dangers of huffing & Ritalin combined use, tell us about your advocacy efforts in regard to the Scooby Do movie, forward information about your NIPAW activities, join the new advocacy group, Families & Friends of Inhalant Victims, forward stories about your losses due to inhalants or about your inhalant use for our web site and help support the NIPC.

Wishing all who celebrate Easter or Passover a Blessed holiday and to all, the Blessings of Springtime to you.

Harvey

SCOOBY DOO COMMENTS

Parent who lost their child to huffing:

I'm speechless too. CANNOT BELIEVE THE SCOOBY DOO MOVIE AND I WAS GOING TO TAKE MY GRANDKIDS TO SEE IT.....NOT NOW!!!!

Do you have a number for Warner brothers?

Thanks for all you do.

God Bless You, Diane

Concerned Parent:

I found it disturbing that Warner Bros. felt it was humorous showing "Shaggy" take a "hit" off the Ready Whip can in the new Scooby Doo movie. (After feeding the ready whip to Scooby, he turned the can right side up and shot it into his mouth) Correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought I was told this was one method kids use. Maybe I am not interpreting this correctly or reading too much into it. I apologize for wasting your time on something so trivial, but it made me angry to see this portrayed as funny to young children. If you can, let me know your take on this. I didn't really notice any reaction from kids. The scary part is that most of the innuendos in movies like this are meant to be understood by adults and go over the heads of the kids. This one was more likely understood by the teens/preteens and not by the parents. I'm sure if they would have had him take a shot of alcohol, or a puff of a cigarette people would have been upset. Thanks, Michael (I

found your site from the ONDCP website)

Parent who lost their child to huffing

Hi Harvey, I am going to forward this update to the Exec Director of Drug Free Marion County so he can forward to the rest of our board. If you have specific contact information for Warner Bros. or whoever is the right person(s) to register our protest let me know so Kim and I can send something directly, but also so we can disseminate broadly. You're right, it's so outrageous it leaves me speechless! Marissa

Concerned Parent:

I was appalled after watching a commercial of Scooby Doo Monsters Unleashed depicting huffing. It said Scooby Doo knows how to party and showed him inhaling a whipped cream can. Our local baseball league sponsors a tournament each year to raise awareness against such behavior. How can this be deemed "cool" by the movie industry? What can I do to voice my complaint? We saw the promo for the movie on our local ABC affiliate Channel 6 (Indianapolis, IN) during morning cartoons on Saturday March 27, 2004 between 10 and 11 am. It says "Scooby really knows how to party" and shows him inhaling the contents of a whipping cream cannister (i.e. nitrous oxide or laughing gas).

Sincerely, Beth

Parent who lost a child to huffing:

It is absolutely appalling Harvey and everyone I have mentioned it to are equally concerned. Let me ask you this. Would it be possible for you to compile a list of email addresses of the appropriate movie industry we could send notes to (not only the parent production companies but the director and producers of the film)? You might also consider a list of movie theater corporations that we could hit as well. Most of us who have been active already have local contacts with media and watchdog organizations, it's these other kinds of entertainment industry folks I could use some help in. Also how about informing our Federal friends. Best, Kim

PS I really think this scene in the movie could be easily fixed. I don't have a problem with the whipped cream/rabies reference but obviously the huffing piece crosses the line. I think that portion of the scene could be edited out and not do any damage to the flow or sense of the movie. Just my thoughts.

Substance Abuse Prevention Worker:

Harvey, Oh my gosh... that clip is an intentional, blatant promotion of

abusing inhalants! I wonder how many kids who saw that thought it was really cool and went to the refrig. to look for a whipped cream can?! Can these idiots at Warner Bros. be sued? Let me know what you suggest we "outraged parents/adults" can do. If they get away with this, promotion of drug and inhalant use will only get worse on the big screen. *Karen*

Parent who lost a child to huffing:

Harvey, Again Hollywood is glorifying substance abuse. The message I got and I'm sure the kids did too, is look what you can get out of a Readywhip can. Best wishes, Bob
Harvey, As a follow up, I have e-mailed and alerted approx. 100 co-workers and friends of this matter. Hopefully the people that I have contacted will do the same. I will also e-mail some of the local TV stations of this. Bob

Parent who lost a child to huffing:

I AM VERY CONCERNED, ANGRY, AND DISGUSTED BY OUR MAINSTREAM MEDIA'S LACK OF DISCRETION, INTEGRITY AND MORAL FIBER.... THIS IS TOUGH TO LOOK AT... A BIT PISSED TOO.....TOY

Parent who lost a child to huffing:

I'm OUTRAGED! The poor unsuspecting little kids who view this movie and the idea is planted. Seems like we take two steps forward and three steps back.
Thanks for sharing, Diane

Parent who lost a child to huffing:

DEAR HARVEY, HELLO, I AM SPEECHLESS, AND SAD THAT THEY MAKE LIGHT OF SOMETHING DANGEROUS THAT KILLS. HOW DARE THEY THANKS FOR SHOWING IT TO ME ONE SHOW I WILL NOT ATTEND NOR WILL MY FRIENDS. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP TAKE CARE GOD BLESS YOU CINDY

Medical Director, Poison Control Center:

I agree -- bad, wrong, dangerous. I'd be happy to write to the studio and to the sponsors of the TV show where this

was first seen -- got names and addresses already to share with the group?

Concerned individual:

(A co-worker) took his kids to see the movie last weekend - he is still incensed about it. Many parents, sadly, won't get it, but all the kids will. Using huffing as an inside joke is a really bad thing.

Parent of an ex-huffer

I would like to help out about the Scooby Doo movie....who can I contact? I know it will send the wrong message, and therefore will add to the problem or being "cute" or not "dangerous". - Joan