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Will New Years Eve Revelers Make Merry In Your Medicine Cabinet?

Upper Nyack, NY, December 29, 2010...At holiday parties in homes around the country, party guests with drug dependencies will be scavenging through medicine cabinets looking for narcotics, anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, and anti-anxiety medications when they make seemingly innocent trips to the bathroom, says Louis Tharp, executive director of the Global Healthy Living Foundation, a patient advocacy organization.

According to 2008 data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 35 million Americans aged 12 and older reported nonmedical use of prescription opioids.

“When you add in mental health drugs,” Tharp says, “the number could rise to 15 percent of the population.”

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy says prescription pain killer abuse is second only behind marijuana as the nation’s most prevalent illegal drug problem.

Dr. Jeff Gudin, MD, a Yale-trained director of Pain Management and Palliative Care at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center in Engelwood, NJ, cautions people about leaving any prescription medication out, “and out means in a medicine cabinet when a party is going on,” he says.

“Real estate agents know to empty the medicine cabinet for open houses, Dr. Gudin says, “but a lot of people throw a party for guests they may not know well, and never consider prescription drug theft.”

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If you're hosting a New Year's Eve party, "don't leave pain killers and anti-depressants in your medicine chest where revelers can abuse them," says Louis Tharp at the Global Healthy Living Foundation.

