

## Rite Aid Foundation Launches New Prescription Drug Safety Initiative in Akron-Area High Schools

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In an effort to help address adolescent drug abuse and misuse in Ohio, The Rite Aid Foundation is bringing the **Prescription Drug Safety** program, an innovative digital course about prescription drug abuse prevention, to Akron-area high schools.

The program, developed by **EVERFI**, the nation's leading education technology innovator used in one in seven schools nationwide, will be made available to high schools in Summit and Stark counties, at no cost. Representatives of The Rite Aid Foundation, Congressman Tim Ryan and Akron Public Schools announced the launch of the new program during a press conference and demonstration at Firestone Community Learning Center.

"The abuse of prescription drugs and opioids is a serious national crisis that threatens the health, safety and wellbeing of our young people," said Tracy Henderson, director of The Rite Aid Foundation and charitable giving initiatives. "One of Rite Aid's core values is to be a caring neighbor, involved in meaningful ways in the communities we serve, especially if it involves improving the health and wellbeing of children. We are proud to introduce this critical prevention education program and provide Akron-area students with the skills and knowledge to prevent the dangerous cycle of abuse before it occurs."

The **Prescription Drug Safety** program uses an evidence-based, public health approach to empower high school students with the skills and knowledge they need to make safe and healthy decisions about prescription drugs. Through interactive scenarios and self-guided activities, students learn the facts about drugs, how to properly use and dispose of them, and how to step in when faced with a situation involving misuse. The course is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health Education Standards and state academic standards.

Ohio is arguably one of the states hardest hit by prescription drug abuse and the opioid epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio is among the top five states with the highest rates of opioid-related deaths. In 2017, there were 5,111 opioid-related overdose deaths in Ohio—more than double the national average. To help combat the opiate crisis, Ohio is investing more than \$1 billion a year to help battle drug abuse and addiction at the state and local levels.

"There isn't a community in the United States that hasn't been affected by the opioid epidemic. It demands our full attention and requires not only treatment but prevention as well. It's partnerships like Rite Aid and EVERFI that will help in educating our young people to make safe, sound, and healthy decisions about prescription drugs. With this kind of outreach and awareness, we can tackle the drug abuse ravaging our nation and prevent any more opioid overdose deaths from ever happening again," said Congressman Tim Ryan, co-chair of the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus and member of the Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic.

Akron Public Schools is implementing the six-lesson online **Prescription Drug Safety** program as part of the health education program. Firestone Community Learning Center is the first Akron-area school to integrate the program into its curriculum. Over the next year, a total of twenty local high schools will activate the program.

"The education and enrichment of our children is the driving force within our community. We must equip them to become visionaries of change and contribute to our community in a positive way," said superintendent of Akron Public Schools, David W. James. "We are extremely grateful to The Rite Aid Foundation for helping us educate our students about such a serious issue. We know this new program will empower them to make healthy decisions and become positive role models in the community."

In addition to the activation in Akron-area high schools, as part of its commitment to creating safe and healthy environments for children and teens, The Rite Aid Foundation, through its KidCents program, will also fund the introduction of the **Prescription Drug Safety** program to high schools in Lucas County, Ohio as well as several communities in Washington, California, Michigan, Oregon and Pennsylvania. In all, The Rite Aid Foundation made a three-year, \$1.7 million commitment to the **Prescription Drug Safety** program, which is expected to reach more than 400 high schools.

Through the KidCents program, members of Rite Aid's loyalty program, **wellness+ rewards**, can round up their in-store or online purchases to the nearest dollar and donate their change to KidCents. Members can also choose to direct their change to a specific KidCents charity by visiting [www.kidcents.com](http://www.kidcents.com). Through KidCents' Step Up Fund, The Rite Aid Foundation provides a matching donation of \$500 for every \$500 a charity raises in contributions through the **wellness+ rewards** program, up to a maximum of \$5,000. For more information, visit [www.kidcents.com](http://www.kidcents.com).

Since its inception in 2001, The Rite Aid Foundation has awarded more than \$52 million to nonprofit organizations. Additionally, Rite Aid, through the efforts of its customers, supplier partners and associates, has also raised more than \$87 million for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals across the country since 1994.

Rite Aid Corporation (NYSE: RAD) is one of the nation's leading drugstore chains with fiscal 2018 annual revenues of \$21.5 billion. Information about Rite Aid, including corporate background and press releases, is available through the company's website at [www.riteaid.com](http://www.riteaid.com).

Akron Public Schools (APS) enrolls more than 21,000 students and employs 3,000 teaching and non-teaching professionals in Northeastern Ohio. The district, one of the state's largest and most diverse, covers 62 square miles in a city of 195,000. APS educators are committed to rigorous teaching and learning, safe learning centers and community engagement to prepare young people to be well rounded and ready for the challenges of learning that follow in life. The goal of APS is to be the #1 urban school system in the United States. For more information about Akron Public Schools, visit [AkronSchools.com](http://AkronSchools.com).

EVERFI, Inc. is the leading education technology company that provides learners of all ages education for the real world, through innovative and scalable digital learning. Founded in 2008, EVERFI has certified over 16 million learners in critical skill areas with more than 4,300 partners in all 50 U.S. States and Canada. EVERFI is an industry convener that builds Networks to tackle the toughest social issues, including the Campus Prevention Network, a coalition of higher education institutions committed to campus sexual assault and alcohol abuse prevention; and the Financial Capability Network, a coalition of industry leaders dedicated to improving financial outcomes for communities across the country. Some of America's leading CEOs and venture capital firms are EVERFI investors including Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, Twitter founder Evan Williams, TPG Growth, and The Rise Fund.

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