



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW COALITION TACKLING RX DRUG PROBLEM

Initial focus is thefts at real estate open houses

San Diego (March 11, 2014)---The Greater San Diego Association of REALTORS®, local nonprofits and businesses, and other partners announced Tuesday the formation of the Safe Homes Coalition that will inform people about the proper use, storage and disposal of prescription drugs.

San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis and San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore voiced strong support for the coalition, which representatives said was a response to reports of prescription drug thefts during real estate open houses.

"The reports of people removing prescription medications from open houses made it apparent that real estate professionals can be the first line of defense in preventing thefts of these medications," Gore said.

The region's 12,000-plus REALTORS® will play a key role in a multi-faceted coalition campaign designed to raise awareness of and help combat the problem.

Millennium Laboratories, nonprofit Mental Health Systems, its North Inland Community Prevention Program, Oakwood Escrow, nonprofit Hope2Gether Foundation, and the San Diego County Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force are the coalition's other founding members.

[The group shared this public service announcement](#), a shorter version of which will be aired on local television and radio stations. The coalition also plans to distribute 10,000 plastic bags through seven REALTOR® service centers across San Diego County.



REALTORS® will be encouraged to ask clients to use the bags to remove prescription drugs from their homes before they are opened to prospective buyers.

Outreach via presentations and materials to real estate professionals and a [Facebook page](#) with information about prescription drug abuse and ways to counter it are also part of the campaign.

The campaign will highlight proper disposal options for prescription medications. Those include national Take Back Days like the one scheduled for April 26, and drop boxes that are available year-round at every sheriff station, at the County Administration Building, and at multiple police stations throughout county.

“Prescription drug abuse is the leading cause of unintended deaths in San Diego County,” Dumanis said. “That’s why we need as many groups as possible working to curtail abuse and misuse. I commend the work of the Safe Homes Coalition in their effort to limit illicit access to prescription drugs.”

Although the coalition’s initial focus is San Diego County, the group plans to expand its campaign through collaborations in targeted communities throughout California, and across the United States.

To view the Safe Homes Coalition's PSA go to: bit.ly/safehomesPSA. The coalition’s Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/safehomescoalition.

Call (858) 391-9303 for information.

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