

# FACE-IT!

Facing Addiction Through Community Empowerment  
and Intervention Teams

IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) will be working with local communities across Western North Carolina to reduce prescription misuse and other forms of drug abuse through a project called **FACE-IT!**. The project is made possible by the generous support and grant funding from the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#),

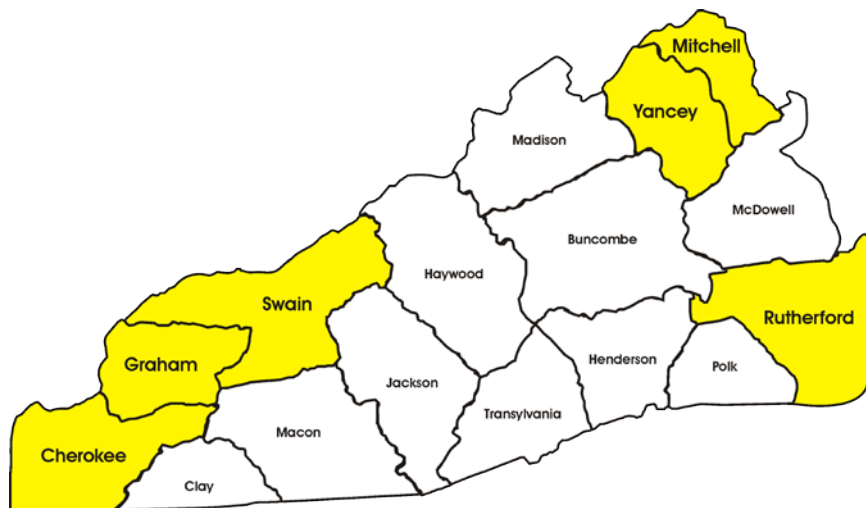
Prescription medications can help people when used correctly under a doctor's supervision, but when people knowingly or by mistake misuse prescribed medicine they put their safety and others at risk. The **FACE-IT!** project seeks to reduce misuse of prescription drugs and improve access to best practice substance abuse education, prevention and treatment for populations at risk in WNC through evidence-based and culturally appropriate training of healthcare providers, interested community members and key stakeholders. The **FACE-IT!** project will provide local support by linking WNC to national and state efforts and substance abuse resources.

## Project Goals:

- 1) Increase dissemination and implementation of research based practices.
- 2) Reduce workforce turnover by improving morale.
- 3) To develop, implement and evaluate community wide stigma reduction activities and enhance intervention and treatment opportunities for those suffering from and affected by substance use disorders.
- 4) To work collaboratively with existing community resources to advocate for consumer needs, serve as "in house" resource leaders, and assist with referrals.

## How can I get involved?

Community residents of Western North Carolina will be the most important group participating in this project. At the annual meeting of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 2008, the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and ARC Federal Co-Chair Anne B. Pope described substance abuse as one of the top three health issues facing Appalachia and a "barrier to economic development". Pope cited an ARC-commissioned study that concluded that Appalachia leads the nation in the abuse of prescription painkillers. The proposed ARC Project Area includes the ARC designated at-risk counties of Cherokee, Graham, Mitchell, Rutherford, Swain, & Yancey.



Project success will depend on local residents and community leaders championing the mission of the **FACE-IT!** project and spreading the word to get people involved. To learn more about how to get involved or how to form an Intervention Team in your area visit <http://sites.google.com/site/faceitinwnc/> or contact the Project Coordinator, Elizabeth at 828-257-4466 or email at [Elizabeth.Flemming@mahec.net](mailto:Elizabeth.Flemming@mahec.net).

## What is the problem with prescription and other substance misuse, abuse or dependence?

Just like drinking too much or using illegal drugs, misusing or abusing a prescription medication can be dangerous. In fact, prescription drug abuse now accounts for more fatal drug overdoses than illegal drugs across the nation as reported by [USA Today in 2009](#). Misusing prescriptions can be lethal so people don't have to abuse drugs to die from them. This is because the short term and long term effects can vary for men, women, people of different ages and ethnic groups due to differences in genes, biology and environmental factors.

Reasons people misuse, abuse or become dependent on a substance along with the symptoms of addiction can also be different. That's why talking with a doctor and being screened for prescription medication problems before or while you are using medication is important. The screenings and diagnostic criteria a doctor or substance abuse provider use are life saving interventions, just like checking blood pressure, that need to be available in all communities. Prescription drug abuse causes social and health problems, along with a higher rate of accidents, violence, death and long term addiction. The **FACE-IT!** project is a first step to help communities respond to Prescription Drug Abuse- the fastest growing part of America's drug problem.

## What medications are typically misused or abused?

Three types of prescription drugs being abused most often as identified on the National Institute for Drug Abuse [NIDA website](#) are:

- **Painkillers**- Drugs such as codeine, oxycodone and morphine are often prescribed to relieve pain in people who have suffered trauma or illness or have undergone surgery.
- **Sedatives**- Valium, Librium and Xanax are among the medications often prescribed to treat anxiety or sleep disorders.
- **Stimulants**- Drugs such as Ritalin, Adderall and Dexedrine are prescribed as weight-loss aides or to treat narcolepsy or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

## Consider these facts:

- For the first time, there are just as many new abusers (12 and older) of prescription drugs as there are for marijuana. (SAMHSA, 2006)
- 1 in 5 teens (or 4.5 million) has abused prescription drugs and 8 out of 10 teens who misuse prescription drugs get the drugs from friends or relatives ([Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2007](#))
- Nearly 7 million Americans abuse prescription drugs, according to the U.S. DEA. The number increased 80 percent from 2000 to 2006, with more people abusing legal drugs than cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, ecstasy and inhalants combined.
- Over 50% of [unintentional drug overdose deaths](#) in North Carolina were attributed to prescription medication, not Heroine, Cocaine or other illicit drugs.
- The National Community Pharmacists Association estimates that the cost of prescription drug abuse is more than \$100 billion per year.

## In conclusion

The **FACE-IT!** Project is just the start to reducing prescription drug abuse. Please give us a call to get involved or share this information with someone you know who might be interested in the project. The next time your doctor writes you a prescription, don't forget to discuss the potential risks of abuse and addiction.

Get more information!



<http://sites.google.com/site/faceitinwnc/>

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