Parents numb to misuse of narcotic pain meds by youth, new poll shows

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ANN ARBOR, Mich., Jan. 23, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Despite data on rising rates of abuse and overdoses of narcotic pain medicines across all age groups, in a new poll from the University of Michigan, most parents said they are not very concerned about misuse of these medicines by children and teens.

In addition, parent support was lukewarm for policies that would discourage abuse of drugs like Vicodin or Oxycontin, according to the most recent University of Michigan Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health [1].

Overall, 35% of parents said they are *very concerned* about misuse of narcotic pain medicines by children and teens in their communities; only 1 in 5 parents (19%) are *very concerned* about misuse of pain medicines in their own families. Black parents (38%) and Hispanic parents (26%) are more likely than white parents (13%) to be *very concerned* about misuse of narcotic pain medicines in their own families.

The poll also confirmed that prescription pain medicine is common in US households with children. Thirty-five percent of parents report that, in the last five years, they had received at least one pain medicine prescription for their children; over half of these prescriptions were for a narcotic pain medicine. Two-thirds (66%) had received at least one pain medicine prescription for themselves or another adult in the household.

National data indicate that the number of drug overdose deaths attributed to narcotic pain medicines is more than overdose deaths from heroin and cocaine combined. However, almost half of the parents in this poll do not favor a requirement that they return unused pain medicine to the doctor or pharmacy. Only 41 percent favor a policy that would require a doctor's visit to obtain a refill on narcotic pain medicines.

"Recent estimates are that 1 in 4 high school seniors h
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[1] http://mottnpch.org/