

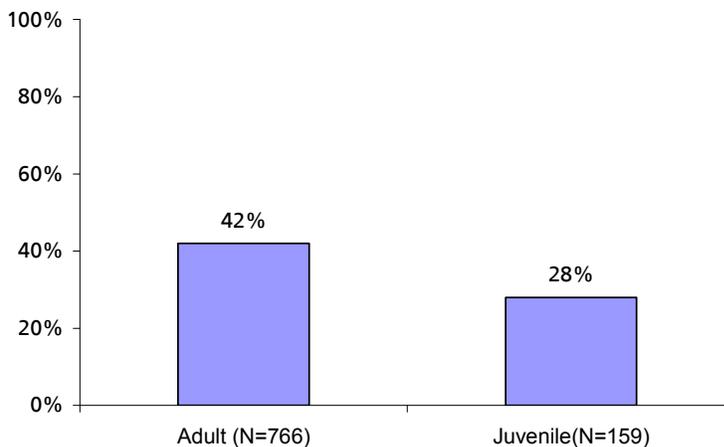
## TACKLING THE MISUSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

A growing concern in recent years is the misuse of prescription drugs (e.g., painkillers, sedatives, and tranquilizers). The most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) reports that in 2007, 6.9 million people (or 2.8% of the population) 12 years of age and older had taken prescription type drugs for non-medical purposes in the past year. The NSDUH also reveals it was most often a friend or family member who provided the medication<sup>1</sup>.

Although arrestees are a higher risk population, soon to be released 2009 preliminary data from SANDAG's Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program reveal that more than two in five (42%) adult and over one-quarter (28%) of juvenile arrestees have abused a prescription type drug in their lifetime (Figure 1). When adult arrestees who reported receiving medication without a legitimate prescription were further asked how they obtained the drug, almost all (95%) said they received or purchased the medication from another person as opposed to using a fake prescription (3%), stealing from another person (2%), or stealing from a pharmacy (1%).

**Figure 1**

### TWO IN FIVE ADULT AND ONE IN FOUR JUVENILE ARRESTEES REPORT MISUSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



SOURCE: SANDAG; Substance Abuse Monitoring Program, 2009

These national and local data highlight the ease by which individuals acquire prescription drugs without a prescription, making accessibility a unique problem to prescription drug misuse. Locally, San Diego County has taken an active role in combating this problem. As part of their prevention efforts on April 17, 2010, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and the Oxycontin Task Force will hold their second "Prescription Drug Take Back Day" event. This event raises awareness of nonmedical prescription drug use, offers information on treatment, and provides a safe place to dispose of unused pharmaceuticals. At last year's event, over 300 pounds of unneeded prescription drugs were received for proper disposal. For more details about the event, please visit the Oxycontin Task Force Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/San-Diego-CA/Oxy-Task-Force/101481557734>.

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2008). **Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings**. On-line at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k7nsduh/2k7Results.pdf>