

HAR

12

FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. HR 12

STATE OF ALASKA
1992 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: _____

Title: "Relating to inhalant abuse."

Sponsor: House HESS

Requestor: Office of the Governor

Department Affected: Department of Law

BRU: Prosecution, Legal Services

Component: Criminal Justice Litigation, Operations

COMPONENT SERIAL

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Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

and 9 3

OPERATING	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE:						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER FUND SOURCE:						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: _____

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

Please see the attached analysis.

Prepared by: Richard I. Pegues, Director
Division: Administrative Services

Phone: 465-3672
Date: May 5, 1992

Approved by Commissioner: Charles E. Cole, Attorney General
Agency: Department of Law

Date: May 5, 1992

Distribution (by preparer): Leg. Fin., Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB/DBR, Gov. Legis. Ofc., & Impacted Agency(ies).

CONTINUATION of FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

For Bill/Resolution No. HR 12

House Resolution No. 12 requests the governor to direct the Department of Law and the Alaska Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse to work with most of the private not-for-profit organizations concerned with drug abuse to determine the appropriate means of model legislation that would promote awareness and prevention of inhalant abuse, provide intervention by enforcement officials, and facilitate placement of a minor in an appropriate facility for education and treatment. The Department of Law can provide legislation drafting assistance from its existing staff without additional cost. The department cannot, however, provide for any travel costs due to current and projected budget restraints. Therefore any communications between the various organizations to be involved in this effort must be accomplished as inexpensively as possible.



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Kevin "Pat" Parnell

University - Midtown, District 10

(907) 465-2647

State Capitol, Rm. 128

Juneau, AK 99801-1182

TO: Representative Dave Donley, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rep. Kevin "Pat" Parnell *DP*

DATE: April 29, 1992

RE: Scheduling for House Resolution 12

I would greatly appreciate your scheduling HR 12, relating to inhalant abuse. Inhalant abuse is fast becoming a dangerous problem in Alaska, with the current trend running to minors abusing toxic vapors four times the national average.

This Resolution would ask that the Governor to direct the Alaska division of alcoholism and drug abuse and the Department of Law to work with the Alaska Medical Association, the Alaska for Drug-Free Youth, the regional health corporations, the Substance Abuse Directors Association, the Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and the Association of Rural Alcohol and Drug Abuse Providers to determine the most appropriate means of model legislation.

I thank you for your consideration of my request.



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SPONSOR STATEMENT for HR 12

I have asked the House Health, Education, and Social Services Committee to introduce HR 12, relating to inhalant abuse, because of the increasing need for action in the area of inhalants, and continuing abuse thereof.

When people think about inhaling a toxic vapor, there is a need to understand the dangers of this action. Recently a 12-year-old boy in Nome died from sniffing gasoline with his two friends. This was followed by three men, who died sniffing laughing gas in Los Angeles, California.

Inhaling toxic vapors is an ever-increasing problem in the United States. It is more prevalent in Alaska. According to the Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Alaska abuse rate is almost four times the national average in children who have used inhalants.

HR 12 addresses the need for model legislation regarding the act of inhaling toxic vapors, because most toxic vapors used are legal. The resolution urges various groups around the state to pool their ideas together to form legislation that would help fight the current trend of inhalant abuse.



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LIST MATERIALS FOR HR 12

1. Sponsor Statement.
2. News Articles:
 - a. Anchorage Times, "Inhalant abuse on the rise," by Pamela Stock, (Jan. 25, 1992).
 - b. Anchorage Daily News, "A Death in Nome: And a call to action," Editorial, (Feb. 24, 1992).
 - c. Anchorage Daily News, "Boy dies after sniffing gas," Police Report, (Feb. 22, 1992).
 - d. Juneau Empire, "Team up, beat inhalant abuse," by Margaret Thomas, (March 1992).
 - e. Anchorage Times, "3 men found dead from laughing gas," Nation Section, (March 7, 1992).
 - f. Tundra Drums, "Youth found dead near open gasoline container," author unknown, (August 18, 1988).
 - g. Tundra Drums, "Doy dies at party," author unknown, (July 18, 1988).
5. Prevention Express, List of Inhalants and what products they are in.
6. All About Sniffing, by the "Do It Now Foundation."
7. Testimony given in the (H) HESS committee by Sara Gray, Student Assistance Counselor, Ronalda Cadiante, Assistant Principal at Marie Drake Middle School, April 7, 1992.

Testimony on House Bill 499
April 7, 1992

Sara Gray, Student Assistance Counselor,
Ronalda Cadiente, Assistant Principal/Counselor
Marie Drake Middle School

We support House Bill No. 499 because we believe that it will strengthen our effort in working with youth in regard to alcohol and drug prevention. Most Elementary and Middle School children respect the law. We believe the fact there is no current legal ramifications to using inhalants minimizes their danger in the children's mind. This bill would provide a clear message to children that to use inhalants as a mind altering substance will result in serious consequences.

This bill also sends a message that we, as adults, have the responsibility of protecting our youth. Toxic vapors are quickly addicting and so severely damaging to users, that prevention must be our first goal. This bill represents a prevention approach which is even more critical when we realize treatment is lengthy, costly, and generally ineffective.

We must also be cognizant of the fact that since most products used are readily available. It would be impossible to prohibit access to the numerous substances. This makes prevention efforts the most effective tool to rely upon.

Marie Drake Middle School has a population of 510 students. During this year alone we have worked with 12 students who have been identified as inhalant users. These students have identified others in their peer group who have participated with them in using inhalants. We do not have the means to project actual numbers, however, a local treatment provider conducted a personal survey of seven adolescents from our school who are in recovery. These students reported approximately 75 students at Marie Drake Middle School along have abused inhalants. One of them had conducted a private list and personally knew of 54 classmates who had abused inhalants. Some of the substances used included rubbing alcohol, peroxide, nail polish and remover, glue, spray paint (black only), diesel gas, markers for white boards, burned weeds (of any kind), rubber cement, scotch guard, Pam kitchen spray, aerosol whipping cream, paint thinner, and aerosol hair spray.

We would like to share with you how inhalant users impact our school by providing a profile these students. Inhalant use crosses all socio-economic, gender, and racial boundaries. We have had opportunity to observe similarities in behavior among students who we know have used Inhalants. These students display a wandering behavior which includes skipping class and roaming the school halls. This, of course impacts their academic performance. These students demonstrate low performance in the classroom and exhibit little or no motivation. In more extreme cases, the student begins skipping school entirely and running away from home. High absenteeism, and lack of academic performance prevails. Emotionally, these students experience mood swings, depression, defiance, and ambivalence. While we are frustrated in searching for solutions, we are also sympathetic with parents who are unable to carry any parental role with their child. These children do not respond to persons in a role of authority. Unfortunately, the only way these students eventually receive assistance, is by committing a criminal offense and become part of the social services system. We have witnessed this time and time again.

We support this bill as a bill which recognizes the real and present danger which attracts a growing number of users among our youth.

ALCOHOL HIDDEN INGREDIENT IN NUMBER OF MEDICINES

She was prim and proper ... a real lady, polite and soft spoken. Her clothes weren't expensive, but she was neat and fashionable for a woman in her sixties.

The check-out clerk in the supermarket bagged her groceries, helped her out the door and turned to me with a bemused smile. "That's the second bottle of NyQuil this week," she said. "She's been buying the stuff like it's going out of style. Could her cold really last for four months?"

While it's entirely possible that this sweet, silver-haired lady had a persistent evening cough, it could also be that she was using this over-the-counter cold remedy as a nightcap.

NyQuil contains 25% alcohol (equal to 50 proof) combined with cough suppressant, decongestant, pain reliever and the antihistamine doxylamine. A nip of NyQuil could become a habit for some folks who, like our supermarket shopper, would probably never dream of drinking liquor.

Around the turn of the century, a lot of strait-laced ladies' relied on Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, which was widely promoted for "women's problems." Many of these women disapproved quite strongly of drinking and would have been shocked to realize that their favorite tonic was stronger than wine.

Just last week, we learned of a foreman who sipped Listerine throughout the day. No doubt he would have been fired had he guzzled beer or whiskey so openly, but his boss was unaware the mouthwash was more than 25% alcohol.

Many popular liquid medications do contain substantial amounts of alcohol. Comtrex Liquid, for example, is 20% alcohol, nearly as much as NyQuil.

While this may not be dangerous in itself, if people take the cold remedy at the recommended dose for a limited time, it can pose a problem for those who must take prescription medicines that don't mix well with alcohol. They should beware of cough syrups such as terpin hydrate elixir (more than 80 proof) as well as cold remedies, including Contac Severe Cold Formula and Dristan Ultra Colds Formula. Liquid iron or amin formulas also may contain alcohol.

(Continued on back page)

INHALANT UPDATE

National surveys show inhalant use ranks third behind alcohol and marijuana. The most effective way to fight solvent use is through prevention and education efforts. When inhaled, most commonly abused vaporous substances act as central nervous system depressants. They disturb vision, impair judgment and reduce muscle control. Inhalant use can cause permanent brain damage and even death. Here's a list of products that young people might sniff. This information is provided to heighten awareness of the potential for abuse of these common and easily obtainable products. Please use this information discreetly and appropriately.

ADDITIVES

gasoline additives

ADHESIVES

building supply adhesives

false eyelash adhesives

fingernail adhesives

PCV pipe adhesives

AGENTS

engine drying agents

CEMENTS

household cement

model cement (glue)

CLEANERS

auto body cleaners

car engine cleaners

electronic equipment cleaners

gun cleaning solvent

window cleaner

COATINGS

aerosol leather coatings

frying pan/pot coatings

DE-ICERS

windshield de-icers

FLUIDS

brake fluid

charcoal starter fluid

fire extinguisher fluid

lighter fluid

power steering fluid

printer fluid

transmission fluid

FUELS

lantern fuel

stove fuel

GASOLINE

HARDENERS

fingernail hardener

MARKERS

felt tip markers

dry erase marker

OCTANE BOOSTERS

PAINTS

aerosol paint

lacquer paint

liquid paint

PENS

fast-drying pens

POLISH

fingernail polish

shoe polish

PRODUCTS

fiberglass refinishing products

photographic chemical products

resin products

shoe shine products

water proofing products

PROPELLANT GASES

fluorocarbons

hydrocarbons

REMOVERS

asphalt remover

fingernail polish remover

paint remover

stain remover

tar remover

SEALANT

tire sealant

STRIPPERS

paint strippers

varnish strippers

SUPPLIES

air supplies

household cleaning supplies

furniture refinishing supplies

THINNERS

paint thinner

VARNISH

furniture varnish

wood varnish

Reported to Alcohol and Drug Abuse Pulse Beats,
August 1988, by Participants in Action in Nebraska.



Rec'd
3/18/92



(Above) First National Bank Vice President, Todd West, presents "Team Up!..." basketball to Floyd Dryden Middle School student.



(Right) Press conference held at East High School officially kicks off awareness campaign.

"Team Up! Beat Sniffing!"

Alaska Council urges all Alaskans to "team up" against inhalant abuse by supporting awareness campaign

of students who had used inhalants or knew of someone now using," Jeanne Fischer, assistant principal at East High School said. Fischer believes the positive manner in which the campaign is being presented encourages students to come forth and share much more effectively than "scare tactics" that are often used in connection with other drug campaigns.

Alaskan youth are facing dangerous times right now with inhalant abuse be-

(Continued on Page 6)

During the past two months, 12 to 18 year old youth who live in Fairbanks, Gambell, Valdez, Napakiak and hundreds of other Alaskan communities began receiving urgent information about inhalant abuse through the Alaska Council's "Team Up! Beat Sniffing!" campaign. The drug awareness campaign was officially kicked off in Anchorage and is now moving with full force through 318 schools in the state.

"Team Up! Beat Sniffing!" was unveiled on January 24 before students, teachers and media representatives at a press conference held at East High School

in Anchorage. Alaska Council staff members explained the purpose of the state-wide campaign and cautioned students about the dangers of sniffing harmful fumes from a variety of commercial products ranging from fuels to non-stick fry pan coatings. Participants were challenged to join the team to "beat sniffing" not only in Anchorage, but in all regions of the state. On February 3, a similar presentation was held at Floyd Dryden Middle School in Juneau where Bette O' Moor, the Alaska Council's Executive Director, warned 150 students about the health risks of inhalant abuse.

"We were astounded at the number

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(Continued from Page 1)



"We were astounded at the number of students who had used inhalants or knew of someone now using,"

**Jeanne Fischer,
Assistant Principal
East High School!
Anchorage**

(Left) Executive Director, Bette O'Moor, is interviewed by KIMO-TV, Anchorage. (Center) Members of East High School's Native Culture Club basketball team are honored at the campaign kick-off. (Below) Campaign posters and basketballs now being sent to schools.

coming the fastest growing drug problem in the state. In fact, the percentage of junior high and high school students in Alaska who have used inhalants is reported to be higher than that of teenage users nationwide. This is why the Alaska Council is determined to reach as many youth as possible with their message.

"Team Up! Beat Sniffing!" attempts to refocus attention on the growing problem and to raise public awareness that inhalant abuse is a total community issue requiring cooperation and commitment from many to address it successfully. Parents, educators, community health organizations and especially youth-at-risk are being asked to join in a comprehensive effort to prevent future abuse from occurring.

The campaign has the potential to reach hundreds of Alaskans and Alaskan families. Beyond a simple lecture approach, it creatively involves youth by linking its prevention message to a healthy activity enjoyed by many—basketball. Posters featuring East High School's Native Culture Club basketball team are being distributed to schools along with purple-and-white basketballs imprinted with the *"Team Up! Beat Sniffing!"* slogan. In addition, a variety of resources for adults are blanketing the state including informational brochures, fact sheets, inhalant abuse research papers, nationwide studies and more.



Funding for the basketballs and their distribution to schools comes from First National Bank of Anchorage and MarkAir Inc. To lend further support, First National Bank has asked several of their Branch Vice Presidents to coordinate presentations of the *"Team Up! Beat Sniffing!"* campaign in schools where branches are located.

"The campaign is really raising the awareness level among students and educators," East High's Jeanne Fischer said. "We were surprised at the kind of information it brought out."

To learn more about the campaign and preventing inhalant abuse in Alaska, contact the Alaska Council at 257-9330.



...the same prod. something called *tolerance*.
This means a sniffer has to keep using larger and
larger amounts to achieve the same effects. This
increases the poisonous effects of sniffing—and
causes damage to the body.

And there's always the danger of overdose. In fact,
overdose is one of the most serious dangers of

Sniffing can cause both kinds of
overdose: *big ones and little ones.*

...because it happens so quickly, without
warning. It isn't like most other kinds of drug
overdose, which can happen a little bit at a time. An
instant overdose happens all at once, then stays
away.

Reasons Why (& Why Not)

If sniffing is so bad, how come so many kids do it?
Well, there are a couple of main reasons.

Some people don't know any better. They might think
just because the tubes and cans that inhalants
come in are legal that sniffing must not be too big a

They're wrong. Sniffing can be dangerous for all the
reasons we've talked about and because it's habit-
forming. That means that people who start out
just for fun keep on sniffing because they don't
know how to have fun without it.

...it to be cool. They might start sniffing
because they think it
is something so
cool and

...think that getting messed up on chemicals
is what they're adults or something. But it
just proves that they're as messed up as
messed-up adults.

...wants to be one of those?

Choosing Now

Still, no matter how many reasons people have for
sniffing, there's one good reason for not sniffing and
it's this: Sniffing messes people up.

That's why we recommend that you think about all of
the things we've talked about in this pamphlet and
choose now about sniffing. Your decision whether to
sniff or not is too important to just stumble into or to
let your friends make for you.

And when you choose about sniffing, why not choose
not to use?

There are just too many good smells in the world. Why
waste them?

All About

Sniffing



A Special Report for Young People

This is one in a series of publications on substance abuse
and health from Do It Now Foundation. Please write or call
for a complete list of available titles.

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PUBLICATIONS

2050 East University Drive • Phoenix, AZ 85034
(602) 257-0797

DIN 143

©1986

7/86

A D.I.N. Publication by Jim Parker.

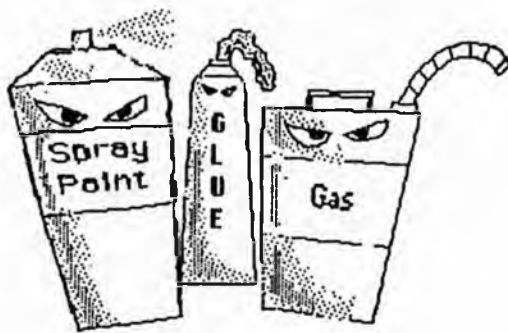
Good Smells & Bad Smells

There are a lot of things to smell in the world.

There's the smell of cut grass in the park or popcorn at the movies. There's the smell of a brand-new book on the first day of school or the smell of rain on a hot summer day. Those are all good smells.

There are other smells, too, and not all of them are as nice.

One of those not-nice things are chemicals, called **Inhalants**. They're called inhalants because they



Gunk Patrol: Inhalants are more alike than different—especially in the problems they can cause.

can be inhaled (or sniffed) into the lungs, where they produce weird effects—like drugs and alcohol.

That's what this pamphlet is all about. In it, we'll talk about how inhalants work—and why they're *not* something to sniff at.

In fact, in this whole world of good smells and bad smells, inhalants can be one of the worst smells of all.

Introducing Inhalants

So what are inhalants?

Basically, they're a lot of *different* things that work alike, more or less.

For the record, though, inhalants fall into three main groups. These are:

- Solvents
- Aerosols
- Nitrites and nitrous oxide

The **solvents** group includes everyday things like glue and gasoline, paint and paint thinner, and typewriter correction fluid.

Aerosols include other everyday-but-dangerous things that come in spray cans, such as hairsprays and deodorants, cooking oils, and spray paint.

The **nitrites** group includes non-everyday chemicals like *butyl nitrite* (sometimes sold legally as "liquid incense" or "room deodorizer") and a gas called *nitrous oxide*.

Even though the chemicals used as inhalants are made for a lot of different reasons, one purpose that none is intended for is being sniffed inside people's noses. But lots of people—especially younger people—put them there, anyway.

And that's where the trouble starts.

Facts & Effects

All inhalants are pretty much the same in the way they work. Each changes the way the brain works by slowing the flow of oxygen and replacing it with the chemical that's sniffed.

The other effects of inhalants are alike, too. A person may feel drunk, numb, and dizzy all at the same time, just from breathing the fumes (usually from a rag or from a paper or plastic bag) of a particular chemical.

And if that sounds like fun, you have to remember that inhalants are also alike in another important way: They cause problems for people.

Here's how it happens:

When they're sniffed, inhalants usually go to work in a matter of seconds, as they pass from the outside world into the lungs and bloodstream.

From there, they're rushed to the brain and heart, kidneys and liver, where they affect the way the



Monsters to Go: Sniffing can cause all kinds of problems—from hallucinations to heart attacks.

body's vital organs do their work. That's where the real problems start.

What sort of problems? *Both kinds of problems:* big ones and little ones.

The Problem Parade

Examples of little problems include slowed reflexes, double vision, and ringing in the ears. Inhalants can also cause *delusions* (which means believing things that aren't true) and *hallucinations*, which means seeing or hearing things that aren't really there.

Then there are bigger problems.

For starters, there's always the risk of long-term damage to the kidneys, brain, and liver. These organs usually don't like the toxic (or poisonous) effects of inhalants—and don't mind letting the rest of the body know about it.

82/5
5/6
VA

Breakdown of chemical inhalant use

(8th-12th grade sampling)

▶ Gasoline	28.4%
▶ Glue	22.6%
▶ Removers (paint, polish, etc.)	17.5%
▶ Sprays (paint, etc.)	17.1%
▶ Polish (shoe, fingernail, etc.)	6.6%
▶ Other	7.8%

Inhalant abuse on the rise

By PAMELA STOCK

X 1,25-92

TIMES WRITER

East Anchorage High School student Jazyk Sharpe saw lots of kids with their noses pressed to gasoline tanks when he lived in Kotzebue. James Young saw fellow students sniffing typewriter correction fluid and getting high off the fumes of felt-tipped pens in class.

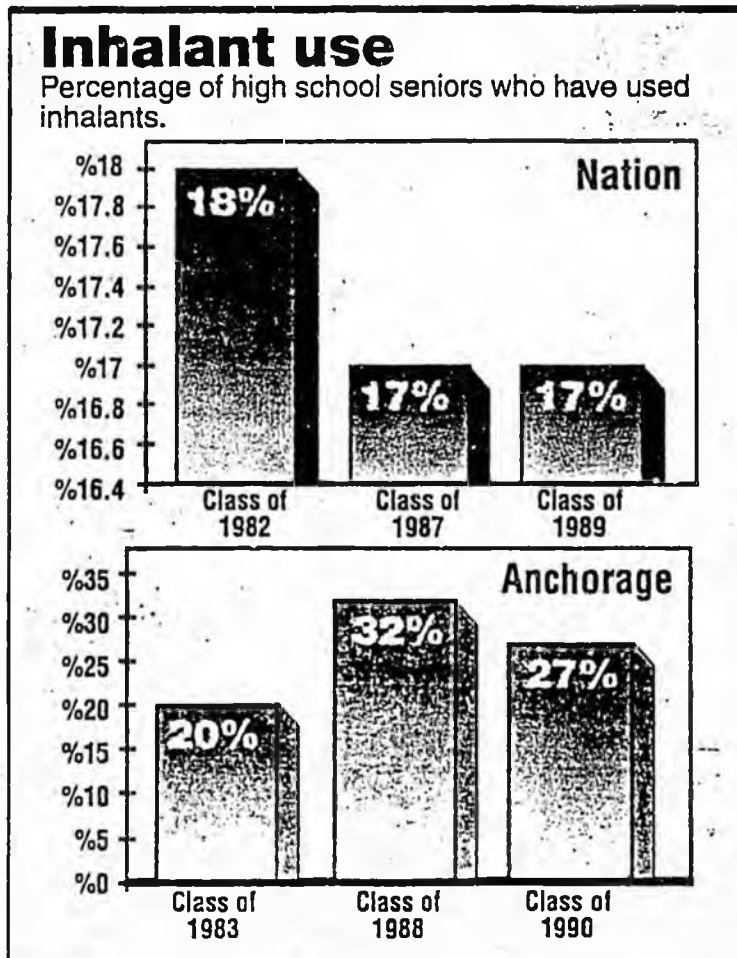
"You see it all the time, once they start doin' it, they keep at it all through class," said Young, 16, a member of the East Anchorage High School Native Culture Club basketball team.

The basketball team, featured in an anti-sniffing poster, and about 80 students of the school's Elitnaurvik Within East program participated Friday morning in the unveiling of a new campaign to increase awareness about the dangers of inhalant abuse.

"Our main message to you is not to start," said Bette O'Moor, executive director of the Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, at the East High School library.

The numbers of youths and adults sniffing glue, ink, paint, gasoline, hair spray and other household products is increasing more than the number of people snorting cocaine, smoking crack

See Sniff, back page



SOURCE: Anchorage School Distric/Alaska Council for the Prevention of Drug abuse



Times photos by RUSS KENDALL

Members of the Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse speak to East High students about the dangers of inhalants.

Sniff

Continued from page A1

or using other drugs, O'Moor said. Inhalant abuse is increasing in both rural and urban areas.

"The products are cheap, easy to get and legal," said Sheryl Snyder, public information assistant for the council.

But the fast high that comes with the whiffs can be deadly.

"It's a drug that can kill you the first time," Snyder said.

O'Moor recited a litany of inhalant-related deaths.

"The body of a 14-year-old boy was found a week after he was last seen with his nose pressed to the gasoline tank; two teens died in a village near Bethel; a 3-year-old child ... suffered permanent brain damage," she said.

Sniffing inhalants leads to dizziness and blurred vision and kills brain cells. It is difficult to tell how many deaths have resulted from sniffing fumes because there is no formal tracking procedure of inhalant-related deaths, she said.

Inhalants are addictive and users often start at a young age and continue through adulthood, O'Moor said. Like other addictive

'The body of a 14-year-old boy was found a week after he was last seen with his nose pressed to the gasoline tank; two teens died in a village near Bethel; a 3-year-old child ... suffered permanent brain damage.'

— Bette O'Moor

Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

drugs, inhalants are considered "gateway drugs" that can lead to other drug abuses.

About a third of the students meeting at the East High library Friday morning said they knew people who had sniffed.

"Maybe they start by accident," said Sharpe, 18, who said he saw preteen-age children sniffing inhalants in the villages around Kotzebue.

He said he inhaled the fumes of gasoline when he was filling the gas tank in his three-wheeler, but he did not get high or hooked.

"All I got was a headache," he said.



Bette O'Moor, executive director of the Alaska Council on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, speaks at the East Anchorage High School library on Friday.

A death in Nome

And a call to action

It was just a small story in Saturday's paper, a police report out of Nome about a boy who died after sniffing gasoline. It took only six sentences, and it was easy to miss, just like it's easy to dismiss sniffing gasoline and glue and spray paint. After all, we never hear about them in the war on drugs. How much of a problem can they be?

Here is the story behind the story:

The Nome boy who died was 12 years old. (Solvent abuse has been seen in children as young as 5.)

The boy had been with two friends, 11 and 14 years old. (A quarter of school-age Alaskans say they abuse inhalants. That's nearly four times the national average. And the Alaska Council on Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse believes the number is even higher, according to feedback it's gotten from a brochure it recently distributed to schools across the state.)

The youngsters had been sniffing gasoline from a portable can. (Gasoline is the inhalant of choice in much of rural Alaska. Used for snowmachines and four-wheelers, it is cheap and available.)

Rescuers found the 12-year-old unconscious and were unable to revive him. (Sniffing gasoline can result in instant death, on the first or 10th or 100th time a person inhales the fumes. The heart simply stops beating. And it can kill its victims in other ways. They can die after choking on their vomit or passing out on a frigid night or lighting a cigarette while soaked with gasoline.)

The other two boys lived. (But inhaling gasoline and other solvents can impair thinking and memory, causing irritable and confused behavior. It can permanently damage the brain, the lungs, the liver and the kidney.)

Sniffing gasoline has a lot in common with abusing alcohol. People do it out of boredom or frustration or because they feel inferior or because their friends do it. And, like abusing alcohol, sniffing gasoline carries a high price.

Only sniffing gasoline, more than any other drug, is the escape of the poor and the powerless. Here in Alaska, it's the drug of the young. And it deserves our attention.

#3

POLICE REPORT ADN 2/22/92

Boy dies after sniffing gas

NOME — Authorities said a 12-year-old boy was dead after he and two companions were sniffing gasoline. Rescuers alerted Thursday night found the boy lying unconscious underneath some trailers used as apartments. Efforts to revive him on the spot failed. He was pronounced dead later at an area hospital. The victim's name was not released. Authorities said he and two companions — aged 11 and 14 — were sniffing gas from a portable can.

Inhalant abuse

By MARGARET THOMAS

THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Organizers of a statewide inhalant-awareness campaign had pictured a rural teen-ager in colorful clothes riding a snow machine into the sunset under the slogan, "Follow Your Dreams."

But when they tested the idea in rural Alaska, kids convinced them it was dumb.

"They actually laughed at us," said Sheryl Snyder of the Alaska Council on Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Anchorage, which is sponsoring the campaign. Many teens ride snow machines out of town and stop to get high on fumes from the gas tanks, the council was told.

It proved once again that adults, as well as kids, need educating about a form of chemical abuse known as "sniffing." There's no lurking dealer; no powder, pipes or pills to tip parents; the danger is as invisible as gas-line fumes.

Eventually, coordinators of the awareness campaign settled on a basketball theme and the slogan, "Team Up! Beat Sniffing." The program got started last month in Anchorage and is moving statewide.

Last week, Bette O'Moor, council director, spoke to about 150 students at Juneau's Floyd Dryden Middle School, and other Juneau schools will receive packets of information about inhalants for distribution to students, teachers and parents, Snyder said.

O'Moor told students at Floyd Dryden to "learn the warning signs," though she didn't tell them which substance are dangerous. Professionals are worried that naming the products teens use to get high could contribute to the problem.

A 1989 survey by the University of Alaska Anchorage indicated that one-quarter of Alaska teen-agers in grades seventh through 12th have tried sniffing. That's more than 3.7 times the national average.

The problem is especially serious in the Bush, Snyder said. Illegal drugs are expensive in rural areas, but gasoline is easy to find.

In Southeast Alaska, sniffing is less common, said Don Dapceвич, chemical dependency administrator for the city-borough of Juneau. "It certainly hasn't been prevalent and it certainly doesn't match our problem with alcohol and marijuana," he said.

Adults generally are unaware of the habit, and teens often are unaware of the hazards, Snyder said. Fuels, paints, household cleaners and aerosol sprays give off fumes that are intoxicating and addictive, she said.

Users soak rags with solvents or spray aerosols into a bag and inhale the fumes. Breathing the chemicals can cause lung disorders, kidney failure, brain damage and death.

"The range of substances used is so dramatic you couldn't possibly put warnings on every label," Dapceвич said.

But what adults can do is be aware of the signs of inhalant abuse, the council said. The breath of users sometimes smells like chemicals and they may develop a rash or ulcers around the mouth and nose. Red, teary eyes, slurred speech, a frequent cough, an unsteady gait and weight loss are other side effects.

Users also report nausea, headaches, nosebleeds, increased light sensitivity, double vision and ringing in the ears.

#4

JUNEAU
EMPIRE
MARCH 1992

NATION

3 men found dead from laughing gas

LOS ANGELES — Lethal doses of laughing gas apparently killed three young men whose bodies were found by police in a pickup truck early today, police said.

The three, all believed to be around 20 years old, were found about 4:30 a.m. in a pickup truck parked in the Chatsworth area, said officer J. McClard.

"It looked like an accidental thing," McClard said. "They were doing something they shouldn't have been doing."

McClard said the victims, who have not been identified, were inhaling nitrous oxide, a colorless gas that is frequently used in combination with oxygen as a light anesthetic during dental work, childbirth or minor surgery.

It was unclear where the victims got the gas.

The men were not immediately identified.

AUG 18 1988

Tundra Drums

#5

Client No. 416

Youth found dead near open gasoline container

ANCHORAGE (AP) — When last seen alive, 14-year-old Freddy George was wandering the streets of Pilot Station in the middle of the night.

A police officer told the boy to go home, but instead he went to a ramshackle cabin near the Yukon River used to store fishing gear.

The Alaska State Troopers say Freddy George apparently died that night after inhaling fumes from an open can of gasoline.

John Evan and his son, Freddy, 12, found his body the next morning on Aug. 10 as they prepared to go fishing.

"When I first saw him, I thought he was sleeping. I couldn't recognize him for awhile," Evan said. "I asked my Freddy to come see who it was. I've been feeling pretty bad about that."

Freddy George often stayed out late, said Patrick Nick, the village public safety officer. When the boy went home, it was usually to his married sister's house. He and his sister and their mother, Sarah, were the only living members of the immediate family, Nick said.

The boy is the second in the Yukon Delta to die in recent weeks after inhaling gas fumes. A 14-year-old Emmonak boy died during a party in late July after he reportedly drank homemade liquor and inhaled gasoline fumes.

Officials said gas-sniffing is a dangerous form of substance abuse that can be addictive and sometimes leads to death from asphyxiation.

"That goes on in the Delta," said Trooper Capt. Glenn Godfrey, who heads the agency's rural law enforcement effort.

"Quite often, it's youngsters, teenagers and pre-teens, who are experimenting with substances. The potential of that being fatal is very high. You get a quick high and all of a sudden, it's too late."

"There's no trend," said Godfrey, who formerly served with the Troopers in Bethel. "I don't see an inordinate number of people dying from sniffing gas. It's nothing we are taking lightly."

Evan said he has been troubled ever since the morning he found the boy's body.

"That's the first time I've found somebody like that," he said. "It's pretty hard to take. I didn't want to go fishing. When I got home, I called the priest. I talked to him. I didn't want to keep it in me. If you keep it inside, it seems to get worse."

TUNDRA
DRUMS
9/18/88

#6

QUALITY SERVICES

Date JUL 18 1986

Tundra Drums

Client No. 222

Boy dies at party

ANCHORAGE (AP) — A 14-year-old Emmonak boy died during a weekend party near his village after he reportedly drank home-brewed liquor and sniffed gasoline, the Alaska State Troopers reported.

Troopers identified the youth as Robert Hamilton.

They said he had been at a party with other youths on a beach along the Yukon River early Sunday. He passed out and could not be revived, troopers said.

An autopsy was scheduled for Tuesday in Anchorage.