

HCR

8

Representative Mary Kapsner

State Capitol • Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

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House District 38

Yukon Kuskokwim Delta

Akiachak

Akiak

Atmautluak

Bethel

Chefornak

Eek

Goodnews Bay

Kasigluk

Kipnuk

Kongiganak

Kwethluk

Kwigillingok

Lower Kalskag

Mekoryuk

Napakiaak

Napaskiak

Newtok

Nightmute

Nunapitchuk

Oscarville

Platinum

Quinhagak

Toksook Bay

Tuluksak

Tununak

Tuntutuliak

Upper Kalskag

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Fred Dyson
Chair, Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committee

FROM: Representative Mary Kapsner

DATE: March 5, 2003

RE: Hearing for HCR 8 – Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week

I would like to request a hearing for House Concurrent Resolution 8 in the Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committee, pending a referral by the Senate President. This is a resolution calling on the governor to declare March 16-22, 2003 as Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week.

This resolution passed out of the House HESS Committee on March 4, and we expect it to be on the House floor on Friday, March 7. Since the designated week is quickly approaching, the time we can take in getting this resolution to the governor is limited. I would appreciate it if you could schedule a hearing for HCR 8 in Senate HESS as soon as possible, pending passage in the House and referral by the Senate President. I have attached a copy of HCR 8, as well as the sponsor statement, for your consideration.

Thank you.

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House Concurrent Resolution 8 - Inhalant And Poisons Awareness Week Sponsor Statement

Although the abuse of inhalants is not a new problem, it is reaching rampant proportions throughout Alaska and among youth across the nation. Part of what makes the problem so frustrating is that the substances used in "huffing" are commonly available and often necessary for their intended uses, but highly dangerous, even fatal, when misused. Many abusers simply are not aware of how physically destructive the "high" they seek really is.

House Concurrent Resolution 8 calls upon the Governor to declare March 16-22, 2003 as Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week. The week would coincide with the National Inhalant and Poisons Awareness Week.

It is our hope that public and private agencies as well as citizens all across the state will recognize National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week, and will observe it through appropriate activities that will educate and inform the people of Alaska of the dangers of inhalants and poisons.

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES



INHALANTS & POISONS

They are right under your nose

CAUTION: This information can be quite dangerous if used by children or youth to find out about how to abuse inhalants. We do not want this to happen, so **PLEASE** be careful with this information and do not allow anyone under the age of 18 to review this material without a parent or educator with the person.

INHALANTS FACT SHEET

- ▼ Inhalants are not drugs. They are toxic chemicals that when used inappropriately, such as by sniffing or "huffing" the vapors, can cause toxic effects, similar to the "high" obtained with drugs.
- ▼ Inhalants can kill the very first time they are used. Death is usually from heart failure or suffocation.
- ▼ Inhalant highs are the result of intensive penetration of toxic chemicals into the brain tissue, where they are capable of causing irreversible damage.
- ▼ In addition to brain, liver, lung and bone marrow damage, there is evidence that chronic abuse of some inhalants causes chromosome and fetal damage.
- ▼ Inhalants are the fourth most abused substance after alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana among high school students.
- ▼ A 1999 nationwide survey of students indicates that 19.5% of eighth graders have used inhalants compared to 22% who have used marijuana/hashish.
- ▼ However, there are Alaska communities where it is reported that up to 90% of the elementary school students have tried or are using inhalants.
- ▼ Chronic inhalant users can suffer severe and permanent brain damage; some die the first time they try it; other possible risks include loss of consciousness and irreversible damage to the liver, kidneys and bone marrow.
- ▼ Inhalants are often a "gateway" to the abuse of other illicit substances. 70% of one group of substance abusers, in treatment, indicated they had started with inhalants and 50% of those indicated they would go back to inhalants (primarily gas) if alcohol was not available.
- ▼ More than 1,400 common, useful and legal household, office and classroom products can be used to "get high".
- ▼ Every year kids die from inhalant use, but many parents and educators remain ignorant of this silent epidemic.
- ▼ Because the chemicals in inhalants enter the lungs in such high concentrations, they have a more formidable toxic profile than other types of abused drugs.
- ▼ Inhalant treatment is significantly more complex than most drug abuse treatment. The toxic chemicals remain in the body tissues for extended periods of time, resulting in the need for a four to six week period of detoxification, prior to actual intensive treatment having much positive effect.
- ▼ Youth with a history of chronic inhalant use have strikingly high rates of relapse. Because of the difficult problems associated with inhalant abuse treatment, these youth are often excluded from some drug abuse programs.
- ▼ Chronic inhalant users may suffer withdrawal symptoms, including: hand tremors, chronic headaches, nervousness, anxiety and excessive sweating.

Signs of Use

There is a common link between inhalant abuse and problems in school – failing grades, chronic absences and general apathy. Other signs include the following:

- ▼ Paint or stains on body, clothing, rags or bags
- ▼ Spots or sores around the mouth
- ▼ Red or runny eyes or nose
- ▼ Chemical breath odor
- ▼ Drunk, dazed or dizzy appearance
- ▼ Nausea, loss of appetite
- ▼ Anxiety, excitability, irritability
- ▼ Restlessness or unexplained moodiness and anger outbursts
- ▼ Missing abusable household items
- ▼ Slurred or disoriented speech

Harmful Effects

Potential long-term effects of inhalant use include:

- ▼ Short-term memory loss
- ▼ Hearing loss
- ▼ Limb spasms
- ▼ Permanent brain damage
- ▼ Bone marrow damage
- ▼ Liver and kidney damage
- ▼ Possible fetal effects similar to fetal alcohol syndrome
- ▼ Intoxication
- ▼ Death

Typical Profile of an Inhalant Abuser

There is no typical profile of an inhalant abuser. Sniffers and huffers are represented by both sexes and all socioeconomic groups throughout the country and Alaska. It is not unusual to see elementary and middle-school age youth involved with inhalant abuse. Although often typified as a "rural" problem, the misuse of inhalable products, besides gas, is, unfortunately, very common in schools and homes throughout both urban and rural Alaska.

Inhalant Prevention Curriculum

There is a good curriculum guide for Kindergarten thru 12th grade available from the State of Virginia, Dept. of Education. It can be downloaded as a PDF file:

www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Inhalantbook.pdf

If you are unable to access it, go to:

www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE

and under Instructional Support Services find Office of Compensatory Programs and under that find Frequently Requested Information and under that "Inhalant Prevention Guide".

Great Britain Website:

www.re-solv.org

RESOURCES

Local Substance Abuse Programs and/or Local Community Mental Health Services

Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation Tundra Swan Inhalant Treatment Program
Bethel, Alaska

- McCann Center – 907-543-6800
- Jim Henkelman, Statewide Outreach Coordinator
- Toll Free: 866-HUFFING [483-3464]
- Or: 907-230-6693

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition
1-800-269-4237, or on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.inhalants.org>

National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Service – 1-800-662-HELP

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information – 1-800-729-6686
<http://www.health.org>

Search for inhalant information at:
www.iointogether.org/sa/

Another good information resource:
www.drugabuse.gov/drugpages/inhalants.html

www.intheknowzone.com

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/10/03

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 3.10.03

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8

HCR 8 INHALANTS AND POISONS AWARENESS WEEK

Requesting the Governor to declare March 16 - 22, 2003, to be Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week.

and recommends:

be replaced with _____ CS _____ (_____)

adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)

attached amendment(s)

adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee

further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:

same title

new title

House Bill:

same title

technical title

new: SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
HRES	3/5/03		X	1

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
<i>Lynne Green</i>	✓			
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
<i>Betty Davis</i>	✓			
CHAIR:				