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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR #34!

### Parents Beware

In response to Greg Feldman's article, "Predatory drugs—what they are and what they do," (April 2003), it is with utmost concern that I expound on the needed level of awareness that parents of young adults must acquire on the growing use of "predatory" and "club" drugs. As a licensed psychotherapist specializing in adolescent addictions for the past 12 years, it is crucial for this type of conversation to take place especially on the heels of increased abuse of not only predatory drugs but also "over-the-counter" drugs among the 18 to 23 year old age group. Along with Rohypnol or "Roofies," GHB, Ketamine, and MDMA or "Ecstasy," another popular "club" drug is Coricidin HBP or "Triple C." Coricidin HBP Cough & Cold is dangerous at high doses and is being abused as a source of DXM (dextromethorphan). Kids are buying this and other drugs (such as Robitussin Maximum Strength or Dexalone) at the local pharmacy or online from Internet sites. According to recent reports, there have been a large number of hospitalizations, and even deaths, associated with people taking Coricidin as a recreational source of DXM.

Unfortunately, parents can no longer rely on the notion that their child is abstaining from traditional drug use (such as marijuana, cocaine, and others) and today's youth is too sophisticated for the average parental inquiry. This false sense of security is magnified when parents venture to use home drug testing kits to "test" for substance abuse and are relieved when results turn up negative. Ironically, these kits do not test for the ever-growing number of "club" and OTC drugs.

Consequently, in treating substance abuse among adolescents, studies have found that family engagement is a better predictor of successful intervention and eventual treatment. The recommendation is for parents to keep vigilant of their child's web surfing, usage of chat-rooms, online purchasing, as well as close monitoring of unusually high

consumption of OTC cold medications. Sadly and ominously, one website warns: "If you do choose to use dextromethorphan recreationally ... choose a safer source such as Robitussin or Dexalone." Parents beware.

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