

# THOUSAND OAKS POLICE DEPARTMENT



## MEDIA RELEASE

GEOFF DEAN, Sheriff  
[www.VCSD.org](http://www.VCSD.org)



Jeff Matson, Chief of Police

Nature of Incident: Officials to host community forum on opiate abuse

Location: Thousand Oaks High School 2323 N. Moorpark Road, Thousand Oaks, Ca.

Date & Time: Thursday, March 31, 2011 @ 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Unit Responsible: Thousand Oaks Police Department Crime Prevention Bureau

### Narrative:

The problem when you chase a dragon is at some point he might turn his head and kill you. There are many metaphors for opium abuse, but the reference to “chasing the dragon” is a grim example of how serious the consequences can be.

Prescription pill and heroin abuse has increased in many communities throughout the United States, and the reason may surprise most people. Many of the young people who find their way down a path toward opium addiction began the treacherous journey in a medicine cabinet at home.

Most prescription pain medications derive their potency from opium. With pills being commonly prescribed, they are easily accessible both at home and on the street. The transition from pills to either smoking or injecting heroin is inevitable, given ample supplies and relatively cheap prices.

The physical and psychological need to maintain the addiction is the bridge that leads from prescription pills to heroin.

The communities in the Conejo Valley are no exception to this growing problem. There were 26 heroin overdoses reported in Thousand Oaks and the surrounding unincorporated areas between Jan. 1, 2009 and March 15, 2011. Four of those cases resulted in death. There were 245 arrests related to heroin abuse during the same time period. Of those arrests, 197 of the cases involved people between the age of 16 and 25.

Thursday evening, officials from law enforcement, the medical field, and behavioral health community will host a forum that is free to attend and open to anyone interested in learning more about this disturbing trend in our community.

In addition to the panel of professionals, there will be several members of the community on hand to share their experiences of how prescription drugs and heroin have affected their lives.

The event will take place in the performing arts center at Thousand Oaks High School.

Anyone with expired or unused prescription drugs can properly dispose of those items in a bin that will be provided at the event by the Thousand Oaks Police Department.

Officer Preparing Release: Detective Eric Buschow

Follow-up Contact: Sergeant Eric Hatlee (805)494-8256 / (805)947-8253

Date of Release: March 29, 2011

Approved By: Captain Brent Kerr

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