

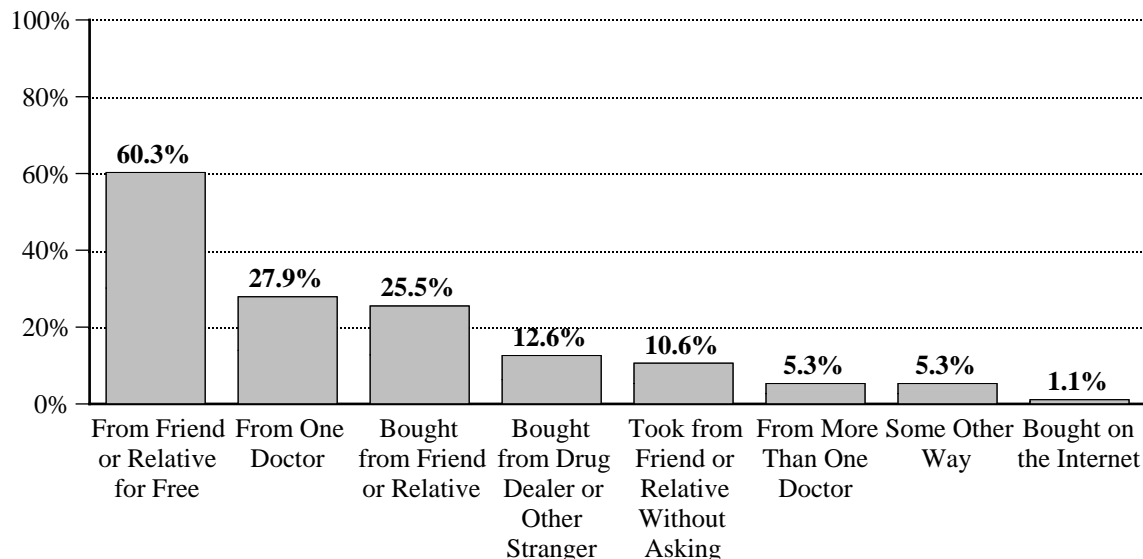
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Majority of Prescription Pain Reliever Abusers Get the Drugs Free from Friends or Relatives

In 2009, nearly 5.3 million people ages 12 and older reported the nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers in the past month, according to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The majority of these users—60.3%—reported that they obtained the pain relievers free from a friend or relative. The other most commonly mentioned methods were obtaining them from a doctor (27.9% from one doctor and another 5.3% from more than one doctor) and buying them from a friend or relative (25.5%). Only 1.1% reported buying their prescription pain relievers on the internet. This past September, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) hosted the first-ever national Take-Back Initiative, collecting more than 121 tons of unused, unwanted, and expired prescription medications for proper disposal.

Method of Obtaining Prescription Pain Relievers Reported by Past Month Nonmedical Users Ages 12 or Older (2008 & 2009 Combined Annual Averages)



NOTES: Percentages do not sum to 100 because respondents could indicate multiple sources from which they obtained pain relievers for past month nonmedical use. The response options “Wrote a fake prescription” and “Stole from doctor’s office, clinic, hospital, or pharmacy” were reported by less than one percent of those who used prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year and are not shown in the figure above.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2010. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/WebOnly.htm#NSDUHtabs>.