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NEWS

APRIL 2008

Treatment Admissions Rising for Methamphetamine, Prescription Drug and Marijuana Abuse

While alcohol abuse accounted for 40 percent of the 1.8 million admissions in 2006 for substance abuse treatment in the United States, according to a report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the percentages of admissions for methamphetamine, prescription drug and marijuana abuse rose sharply, and the percentage of admissions for alcohol abuse treatment is markedly lower than the 51 percent share it represented in 1996.

SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) 2006 Highlights report shows that while the percentage of treatment admissions primarily due to methamphetamine/amphetamine abuse is relatively small, it nearly tripled from 3 percent in 1996 to 9 percent in 2006. The criminal justice system was the principal source of referral for 55 percent of all the treatment admissions for methamphetamine/amphetamine abuse.

Although the percentage of treatment admissions for primary heroin abuse is at about the same level it was a decade ago (14 percent), the percent of treatment admissions for other opiates – mainly misused prescription pain killers – increased from 1 percent in 1996 to 4 percent in 2006.

Similarly the proportion of admissions for primary marijuana abuse increased from 12 percent in 1996 to 16 percent in 2006. The average age of those admitted primarily for marijuana treatment was significantly younger (age 24) than the average age for all substance abuse treatment admissions (age 34).

“The TEDS report shows the variation in substance abuse treatment admissions over the years, including the recent increases in methamphetamine, prescription pain killers and marijuana,” said SAMHSA Administrator Terry Cline, Ph.D. “States and local providers can use the report to anticipate and plan for capacity needed to address emerging needs.”

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The TEDS 2006 Highlights Report is available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/teds2k6highlights/TOC.cfm>, or by calling SAMHSA's Health Information Network at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) and asking for publication number SMA-08-4313 (as reported by [CADCA](#) on February 21, 2008).

Survey Shows Meth and Cocaine Use Down Among U.S. Workers

(Washington, DC)—John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, today highlighted new data showing significant reductions in meth and cocaine positivity rates in the American workforce, as well as continued disruptions in the supply of both drugs.

According to data released today by Quest Diagnostics' Drug Testing Index ® (DTI), results from workplace drug screenings conducted in 2007 show a more than 50 percent decline in the percentage of positive tests for methamphetamine over two years, from 28 of every 10,000 people testing positive for meth in 2005, to 14 of every 10,000 testing positive for meth in 2007.

"Dangerous drugs like methamphetamine and cocaine have scorched many American communities and ruined lives and families," said Director Walters. "We need to put more pressure on the people and organizations profiting from the sale of these poisons. But the data released today show that when we push back, we can make progress."

Over the last few years, changes in State and Federal laws, as well as tighter international chemical controls, have made it more difficult for meth producers to get the precursor chemicals they need to make the drug. Domestic meth lab incidents have dropped by more than 70 percent since 2004, while seizures of meth along the U.S. - Mexico border are down 32 percent from 2006. The Southwest border seizure declines coincide with aggressive actions by Mexico to limit the amount of meth precursor chemicals coming into the country. In 2004, more than 224 MT of pseudoephedrine was imported by Mexico; in 2008, the Calderon Administration has ceased to issue import permits for key meth precursor chemicals, and all remaining supplies in the country must be depleted by 2009.

The decreases in meth use have contributed to a market constriction, placing stress on dealers to maintain revenue flow by decreasing the purity of the drug, while increasing price. The latest data from the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) System to Retrieve Information on Drug Evidence (STRIDE) database indicates an 84 percent increase in price per pure gram of meth from January to December of 2007, from \$152.39 to \$280.06. The purity of meth during the same time period decreased 26 percent.

"Increased drug prices and decreased purity confirm what DEA agents are seeing across this country: a hard hit on the drug supply," said DEA Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart. "DEA and our partners are attacking traffickers' movement of drugs, money, and chemicals like never before, and the data is a strong indicator that we have struck the traffickers a severe blow. The impressive decline in drug use by America's workers is further evidence that our collective efforts are working."

According to the DTI, workplace drug tests have also found sustained decreases in cocaine positives among the U.S. workforce. Quest Diagnostics' latest findings show a 19 percent decrease in cocaine positives, from 72 out of every 10,000 workers testing positive for cocaine in 2006 to 58 out of every 10,000 in 2007. This decline represents the lowest rate of cocaine positives since the DTI began reporting the data more than a decade ago.

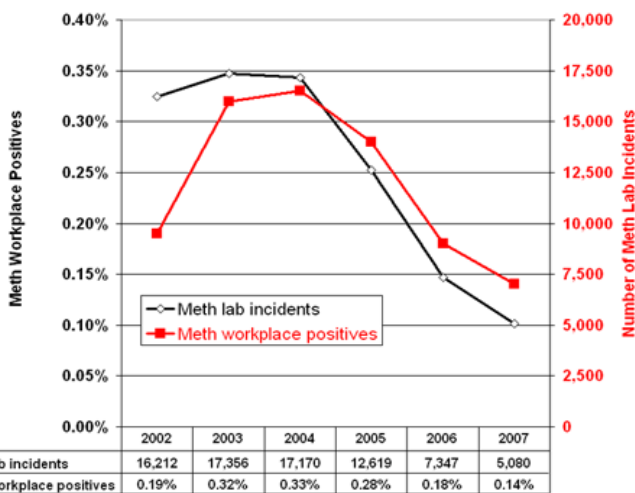
"The Drug Testing Index emphasizes the steady reversal of a trend in which methamphetamine positivity rates in the general workforce increased by 68 percent from 2002 to 2003 and peaked in 2004. Results from the Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index indicate that the number of positive tests for cocaine was down 19 percent between 2006 and 2007," said Barry Sample, Ph.D., Director of Science and Technology for Quest Diagnostics' Employer Solutions division. "This represents the biggest single-year decline in cocaine positives since 1997."

With fewer customers, cocaine dealers are facing market pressures similar to those for meth. DEA's STRIDE database indicates that, from January to December of 2007, the price per pure gram of cocaine increased 21 percent, while purity of the drug decreased 10 percent.

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The latest DTI also supports previous findings from Federal drug use surveys that warn of a rising tide of prescription drug abuse. Positives for amphetamine—stimulants that can include prescription drugs or diet aids—increased more than seven percent from 2006-2007. To address the growing prescription drug abuse threat, President Bush and the ONDCP have launched an unprecedented advertising effort urging parents to safeguard their children by safeguarding their prescription drugs. The President has also called on Congress to pass legislation that would prevent rogue Internet pharmacies from providing controlled substances without the controls of a legitimate doctor-patient relationship or a valid prescription.

Quest Diagnostics, the largest provider of diagnostic testing, information, and services conducts employer drug testing services throughout the Nation, and their DTI, a summary of workplace drug tests, is an indicator of national drug use trends. The latest findings are based on results from more than 6.6 million general workforce drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics across the United States in 2007. These general workforce drug tests, added to the federally-mandated safety-sensitive workforce tests, sum to an annual total of 8.4 million combined U.S. workforce tests in 2007.



For more information, visit www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov. To view the Quest Diagnostics 2007 Drug Testing Index, visit www.questdiagnostics.com (as reported by [Office of National Drug Control Policy](http://www.officeofnationaldrugcontrolpolicy.gov) on March 12, 2008).

Illinois Meth Project Launches Large-Scale Meth Prevention Campaign

The Illinois Meth Project today released results of the 2007 Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions. The in-depth survey examining Illinois teens' attitudes and behaviors toward methamphetamine shows that many Illinois young people consider Meth an easily accessible, low-risk drug that offers a myriad of benefits.

Nearly one in four teens (22%) reported the drug is readily available and 26% see little risk in giving it a try. The survey also suggests that teens perceive significant benefits in using Meth -- 21% cite weight loss as a key benefit, 16% believe it will make them happy, and one in 10 teens (12%) say Meth will help them deal with boredom. Not only do some teens see benefit in using Meth, but the data further indicates a relatively low level of social disapproval -- 49% of teens have not tried to dissuade friends from taking Meth, and nearly one in three (30%) believe their friends would not give them a hard time for using the drug.

"Sadly, adolescents often have little or no factual information about the risks involved with illicit drug use, and make decisions based on incorrect assumptions and perceptions," said Wendy Bailie, Director of Substance Abuse Services at Franklin-Williamson Human Services, which treats patients with addiction problems, including methamphetamine, at its centers in southern Illinois. "These results clearly show the gross misconceptions teens have regarding methamphetamine use. Many just don't realize the destruction that comes with trying Meth."

Treatment, law enforcement, and social services data confirms the need for Meth prevention and public awareness. U.S. Department of Justice identifies methamphetamine as the primary drug threat in central and southern Illinois.ⁱ Methamphetamine's cost to Illinois is roughly \$2 billion per year according to the University of Illinois.

Teens are particularly vulnerable to experimentation with Meth-in Illinois, 72% of people in treatment for methamphetamine began using at age 17 or younger.ⁱⁱ While behavioral research shows parent-child communication to be a powerful tool in discouraging risky

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behavior, survey results showed that 50% of teens have never discussed Meth with their parents.

"Understanding the precise beliefs and attitudes driving Meth use guides the Illinois Meth Project in identifying what messages work and what teens simply tune out," said Mike Reagan, chairman of the Illinois Meth Project. "This survey is also critical in it helping us track progress as we work to shift attitudes and behaviors towards methamphetamine. To ultimately reduce usage, we need to arm teens with the truth about Meth."

The survey details findings from a random sample of more than 912 middle and high school students, ages 12 to 17, across the Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign regions. The results offer a window into adolescents' perceptions of this harmful drug and will guide future Illinois Meth Project campaigns.

The 2007 report also serves as a benchmark to measure future impact of the Illinois Meth Project's large-scale prevention campaign to educate the state's youth about the dangers of methamphetamine use.

The 2007 Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions was executed in September and October 2007, by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The complete report can be obtained on the Illinois Meth Project's website at <http://www.illinoismethproject.org>.

About the Illinois Meth Project

The Illinois Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in February 2008, the Illinois Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Illinois Meth Project is established by the Meth Project, a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach.

For more information, visit <http://www.illinoismethproject.org>.

Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2007 Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions revealed that many young people see potential benefits and little risk in taking methamphetamine, find the drug readily available, and have had limited discussions about Meth with their peers or parents. The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings.

All statistics are sourced from the 2007 Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions report, which is available at <http://www.illinoismethproject.org/survey> (as reported by the [Illinois Meth Project](#) on February 11, 2008).

U.S. Highlights Latest International Progress Against Methamphetamine; Urges Vulnerable Nations to Increase Efforts to Curb Precursor Chemicals

The U.S. Deputy Drug Czar, Scott Burns, announced today that Mexico has made monumental strides to disrupt the methamphetamine precursor chemical trade, and is making a direct and significant impact on trafficking of finished meth into the United States. Mexico, under the leadership of President Calderon, has drastically reduced the amount of imports of methamphetamine precursors in 2007, and has ceased to issue import permits for key meth precursor chemicals. Sellers of products containing meth precursors must deplete their remaining supplies by 2009. Estimates indicate that the Mexican precursor control efforts have already contributed to a nearly 50 percent decrease in meth seizures along the U.S. Southwest border.

"Mexico's bold action to eliminate the flow of meth precursor chemicals benefits all nations and is helping to safeguard millions of people from the pain and social consequences that meth brings," said Deputy Director Burns. "But there is still more that can be done internationally. Many nations remain vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking of meth chemicals. We must act collaboratively to continue to disrupt the methamphetamine market and to put the violent drug trafficking organizations that profit from the misery of addiction out of business."

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Despite the widespread cooperation of most nations, many countries do not have sufficient controls in place to prevent chemical diversion, or have yet to provide sufficient reporting on legitimate commercial requirements and transactions to multilateral institutions. Many countries, such as Iran, Burma, and Syria, have not reported legitimate trade data to allow international bodies to measure licit national requirements for precursor chemicals against actual imports. This comparison can be very useful to determine potential illicit diversion. The United States urges these countries to support the efforts of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) to monitor global trade activity for pseudoephedrine and ephedrine.

To date, 105 countries have supplied the INCB with estimates of their national licit need, which has, in turn, been used to investigate and stop suspicious or excessive shipments of precursors. Provision of legitimate trade estimates can help identify nations with imbalances in licit need versus precursor imports. For example, though they do not provide trade information, Iran and Syria report a licit need estimate for pseudoephedrine that could rank them among the top five global importers of the product.

The United States, at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting in Vienna, Austria on March 10th, will call on all nations to refine their estimates of precursor chemicals licit need and to support transparency by providing import and export data for these products to international trade databases (as reported by the [Office of National Drug Control Policy](#) on March 6, 2008).

STUDIES/REPORTS

Helping Communities Combat Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratories

The Society for Public Health (SOPHE), along with partners at the American College of Medical Toxicology and the support of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, has developed a new resource for

health care professionals focusing on the public health challenges of clandestine methamphetamine labs. [Click here for toolkit.](#)

Nonmedical Stimulant Use, Other Drug Use, Delinquent Behaviors, and Depression Among Adolescents

This report put out by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), presents data on the use of stimulants (including methamphetamines) non-medically in 2006, as well as delinquency and depressive episodes among the users. [Click here for this report.](#)

EVENTS/TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Prenatal Methamphetamine Exposure and Child Outcome: What Do We Know?

Date: April 24, 2008. Location: Teleconference.

This presentation will review the current literature and then present findings from a multisite longitudinal study of approximately 400 meth-exposed and meth-unexposed children. Findings from birth to age three will be discussed. For more information [click here.](#)

The purpose of this monthly electronic newsletter is to provide county officials, administrators, criminal justice and mental health professionals, and other interested parties relevant information on the nation's methamphetamine problem. Information is gathered from many sources each month through a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

If you have questions or comments regarding the content of this newsletter, please send a message to jcarmody@naco.org.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.