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### News

June 2007

#### Sens. Grassley, Durbin Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Combat Meth

Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA), both members of the Senate Anti-Meth Caucus, today introduced the Methamphetamine Production Prevention Act of 2007. This legislation will promote the use of electronic logbook systems by pharmacies to better track the sales of ingredients that could be used to make meth.

Most of the chemicals necessary to produce methamphetamine are readily available in household products or over-the-counter cold or allergy medicines such as pseudoephedrine. Current law restricts the amount of these ingredients that can be purchased at one time by a single person. Some meth producers have been able to get around restrictions by "smurfing" - purchasing illegal amounts of meth precursor drugs by traveling to multiple pharmacies and buying small quantities at each.

"Smurfing" now accounts for at least 90% of the pseudoephedrine used to make meth in Illinois," said Durbin. "Electronic logbook systems provide a more effective method of tracking the purchases of these drugs. With the proper resources, pharmacies can keep their logbook information electronically and share that information with law enforcement. The information can then be used to identify and prosecute meth manufacturers attempting to beat the system."

"The Midwest has been hit especially hard by meth and the ability to buy the ingredients over the counter," Grassley said. "Despite the positive impact the Combat Meth Act has had on lowering the production of home cooked meth, people are exploiting loopholes that allow one to smurf between different pharmacies. An electronic logbook will be a tremendous asset for local law enforcement and businesses as they work to end the devastating impact of meth on our communities."

This legislation revises the technical logbook requirements found in the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act ("Combat Meth Act"). Enacted in 2006, the Combat Meth Act limits the amount of meth precursor

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drugs - drugs that can be used to make meth, such as pseudoephedrine - that a customer can buy and requires pharmacies to keep written or electronic logbooks recording each purchase of the drugs. This approach has led to a drop in the number of meth labs discovered in many states, however, meth producers are beginning to adapt to the current restrictions through the practice of "smurfing".

"For years, methamphetamine has been plaguing communities in Illinois and throughout the nation," said Durbin. "Law enforcement agencies are forced to devote a large percentage of their time to finding, busting and cleaning up meth labs - taking away precious resources that should be used for crime prevention. Law enforcement experts agree that electronic logbook systems are an important tool in our efforts to combat meth. We can, and should, do more to help make these logbook systems work" (as reported by US Fed News on May 4, 2007).

### **Multiple Pieces of Meth Prevention Legislation Introduced in Congress**

A recent study by the Health and Human Services Department showed that more than 1.6 million children live in a home where at least one parent abuses illicit drugs, including methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and prescription drugs. In an effort to address the challenges of children abandoned, neglected or abused by parents addicted to drugs, Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-CA/18th) introduced H.R. 1199, the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Act of 2007 in the House. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced a similar bill in the Senate. In addition to these pieces of legislation, several other bills have been introduced in the Senate to address and prevent the problems associated with methamphetamine production and use.

On May 22, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing on Congressman Cardoza's Drug Endangered Children Act of 2007, during which he testified. The DEC Act of 2007 would make \$20 million available in grants for drug endangered children in FY 2008 and FY 2009. The grants are designed to improve coordination among law enforcement, prosecutors, children protection services, social service agencies, and health care providers to help

transition drug endangered children into safe residential environments.

Congressman Cardoza—a father of two children adopted through the foster care system—urged committee members to support the bill, noting the severe mental and physical toll that children face when their parents are addicted to meth.

"Meth is extremely dangerous for children not only because meth addicts are more likely to abuse and abandon their children, but also because meth-addicted parents often set up meth labs in their homes. In my district, children have been found at labs with burns from spilled ingredients from the methamphetamine production process," he testified.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, children are found at 20 percent of all meth lab seizures. Meth labs are filled with toxins, prone to fire and explosions, and can have lasting health effects on children exposed to their surroundings.

Children removed from meth labs then present unique challenges for local officials, as they require special attention and care to transition into stable residential environments. In a survey by the National Association of Counties, 69 percent of respondents from county social service agencies indicated the need for specialized training for their welfare system, to develop protocols to address the needs of children displaced by parental meth abuse.

Congressman Cardoza testified that parental meth use is by far among the most serious challenges in the foster care system. H.R. 1199 would ensure that drug endangered children receive the attention and care they need to transition into safe and healthy homes (as reported by [Coalitions Online](#) on May 24, 2007).

### **In Minnesota and Hawaii, Community Funds Take Steps to Curb Meth Use**

Minnesota and Hawaii face different challenges in dealing with methamphetamine abuse, but two community foundations have found innovative ways to tackle the problem. Over the past three years, the Initiative Foundation, in Little Falls, Minn., has fought the drug in central Minnesota, a largely rural region where

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more than 300 "meth labs" have been raided in the past few years — and children have been found at the crime scene in half those raids. And over roughly the same period, the Hawaii Community Foundation, in Honolulu, has worked to combat the influx of the drug, which accounted for 58 percent of drug-treatment admissions in 2005 and was responsible for 87 deaths that year in Honolulu alone.

In February 2005, the Initiative Foundation's board decided in February 2005 that fighting methamphetamine should be a major grant-making priority. The foundation moved quickly, and joined with the Hazelden Foundation, the addiction-treatment center in Center City, Minn., to develop resource materials that examine facts and misperceptions about the drug, treatment options, legal guidelines for employers worried about meth use among workers, and other concerns.

"We don't pretend that we're an expert on an issue," says Kathy Gaalswyk, president of the foundation, "but we can mobilize the folks that are, and that's what brings about community change."

That summer the foundation also won a \$200,000 grant from the McKnight Foundation, in Minneapolis, for its anti-meth campaign, and later that year the Bush Foundation, in St. Paul, donated \$300,000.

By September, the Initiative Foundation had published a special 52-page edition of its IQ magazine devoted to the local meth crisis that had an initial press run of 100,000 — a far broader circulation than the magazine's usual 13,500 — and was included as an insert in five regional newspapers. The foundation raised another \$150,000 via ad sales in the magazine and contributions that trickled in.

The foundation's campaign was unveiled at a November 2005 conference in St. Cloud that drew more than 1,000 adults, as well as 1,100 students gathered at auxiliary sites who received sky-blue rubber bracelets embossed with the slogan "Life or Meth" and listened to David Parnell, who speaks nationwide about his seven-year meth addiction and attempted suicide.

Ms. Gaalswyk says the magazine and conference served a crucial purpose: "There were a lot of fears, a lot of

myths, a lot of misunderstandings, and people just appreciated having excellent information."

The foundation now works with 11 coalitions in central Minnesota organized at the county or tribal level. Each coalition must meet certain requirements, including raising \$15,000 from other sources, recruiting diverse leadership, identifying local resources, and crafting a plan for fighting methamphetamine that takes law enforcement, public education, and treatment into account.

"We meet with them a couple times before they get going to make sure they understand the commitment they're making," says Ms. Gaalswyk.

The foundation helps the coalitions identify priority activities, attends their meetings, and provides encouragement and materials. For example, the foundation has worked with experts to develop ordinances that counties can use to determine who has legal responsibility for rental properties that have been used as meth labs.

Meanwhile, 4,000 miles away, the Hawaii Community Foundation has awarded 138 grants totaling more than \$10.7-million since 2003 to fight meth use.

The state's far-flung geography presents special challenges to the foundation, which has three program staff members who work solely with its Crystal Meth Initiative. For instance, because much of the drug comes in through small airports scattered throughout the islands, the foundation helped create an antismuggling unit and related committees. It provided support for seven new positions in Hawaii over two years, and the effort was deemed successful enough that the county government later incorporated those positions into its budget.

Also on the Big Island, the foundation has awarded \$1-million over two years to the Marimed Foundation, in Kaneohe, to start a residential and day treatment program for adolescents so that young people don't have to travel to Maui or Oahu to get help kicking their addictions.

"We would have approached the youth-prevention side through some fairly conventional grant making. The state

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purchases bed space for treatment providers, and law enforcement would be doing what they could do," she says. "But what we've been able to do is to elevate a strategy — to get people talking and to keep them talking."

To encourage discussions, the foundation has attended or sponsored "meth summits" on Hawaii and Kauai. At the first, held in 2002, some 350 Big Island residents came together for two days to discuss the havoc that meth was wreaking in their neighborhoods, as well as what schools, religious groups, and community leaders were doing to battle the drug.

Says Ms. van Bergeijk: "Each year, we've gone back and reported what we're doing and what's happened. It's important for communities to see that progress is being made, because when we started there was almost a sense that this was hopeless, out of control" (as reported in [The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#) on May 17, 2007).

### **Candy Flavored Meth Targets New Users**

During an investigation last month, Arkansas police officers found a bundle of materials suspected of being used to cook methamphetamine in a trash can — but what gave them pause were the packets of a strawberry-flavored children's drink mix next to it.

From lollipops to high-sugar sodas, law enforcement officials say they've found meth cut with a variety of candies, drinks and other materials over the years. Officials say the "designer meth" can smooth the chemically rough ingestion of the drug, making it easier for first-time users to try.

"It's really a bitter substance ... so if you're going to try to make it more consumable for the masses, then you're going to want to try to take that edge off whichever way you can," said Chris Harrison, chief illicit laboratory chemist at the Arkansas lab.

"The drug cartels operate just like any other corporation would — if they want to increase their market share, then they're going to have to change something about it. This is just an evolution. They've saturated the heavy users, now they are moving onto some other people," he said.

The latest meth cut, known as "Strawberry Quick," uses powdered drink mix to give the drug a pink coloring. The sweetness of the powder can make meth more palatable and partially masks its harsh chemical taste.

The new cut has been the focus of several law enforcement bulletins in western states. While there have been several reported cases of police finding the cut in Arkansas, it is "not widespread," said William Bryant, assistant special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Agency's Little Rock district office.

"It's a different spin, like a marketing thing," Bryant said.

That marketing has taken a variety of forms for methamphetamine, found in powder and in a crystallized form similar to broken glass. Its low boiling point allows for it to easily be smoked or injected as a liquid into the bloodstream.

Because of its chemical properties, meth easily mixes into any water-based liquid. Caffeinated, high-sugar energy drinks and sodas often litter areas where meth cooks manufacture the drug, sometimes used as a chaser to the stimulant, Harrison said.

Outside of drinks, police also have seen meth mixed with a variety of candy, cola and chocolate flavors. Cutting it with something else also may help cutting down the burning sensation some have when snorting powdered meth, Harrison said. When snorted, he said meth can destroy a person's septum.

"You have some hard-core users that are prepared for the burn that methamphetamine will have," Harrison said. "Snorting it is supposed to be really hard on the nostrils."

Some meth cooks also have dyed meth different colors using a process similar to that used to make rock candy, though Harrison said it didn't help cover the taste.

"Strawberry Quick" came to prominence in January, after the Nevada Department of Public Safety issued a bulletin describing the type of meth there, said Steve Robertson, a Washington-based spokesman for the DEA. In the time since, Robertson says DEA agents have heard reports of flavored meth appearing in Missouri, Texas, Washington state and Wisconsin — though he stressed it was not a nationwide phenomenon.

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"Traffickers are out there and are trying to sell it to customers, whether they are young customers or older, brand-new customers by changing the color or the taste or just giving it a less-intimidating name, they are trying to make it seem less dangerous and lure this new customer base," Robertson said. "If someone was completely terrified of trying it, it might diminish the threat."

The reports of flavored meth come as the DEA and local police department keep increased pressure on the drug's manufacturers. In 2005, the Arkansas Legislature required those purchasing over-the-counter medications that can be used to cook meth show identification and that the drugs be stored in a secure location. This year, the Legislature approved creating an electronic database to monitor sales of the medications.

Bryant says those crackdowns contributed the number of found methamphetamine labs in Arkansas dropping from 1,206 in 2004 to 446 last year. In the first quarter of this year, he said there have been only 56 labs found.

However, Harrison cautioned as the number of discovered labs has dropped, the amount of methamphetamine being seized by police has increased steadily. He said that could be coming from operations not being found by police, as well as meth coming into the state from the west coast and Mexico.

Rick Gallagher, assistant director of the state Crime Laboratory, said the drug remains one of the most abused in the state.

"It might vary from place to place like alcohol and marijuana, but you'd hear the word 'methamphetamine' a whole lot," Gallagher said (as reported by [CBS News](#) on May 2, 2007).

### **Meth Use by Expectant Mothers Increasing**

With the continuous increase of methamphetamine use among pregnant women, those who often go unnoticed are the babies. Pregnant mothers often do not seek medical care from the time of conception for fear of being discovered as a drug user. According to doctors, since unborn children do not receive the health benefits of prenatal care, and because the mother is using methamphetamine, the child has a much higher risk of

fetal death and physical or mental disabilities.

Dr. Galen Reimer, doctor of obstetrics and gynecology at Banner Churchill Community Hospital in Fallon, said there has been a noticeable increase of positive drug screens in Churchill County regarding mothers and infants. "We aren't seeing anything different here than everywhere else in the country," he said. "We report all confirmed cases to child protective services."

Reimer said a study conducted in the mid-2000s on infant drug screens indicated 8 percent of deliveries tested positive.

Dr. Tapashi Dev Roy, pediatrician for BCCH, said the first trimester is the worst time for a mother to be using because it is the most developmental stage. However, she said few addicts or drug users begin taking the drug after becoming pregnant.

Methamphetamine was something that became popular among working "super-moms" in the 1990s, she said. It enabled them to work two jobs and take care of the home and children. Yet the effects of the drug came after years of use and were recognized to cause serious health problems, said Roy.

When a child is suspected of being exposed to meth, they are tested. If the test is positive, child protective services is called, said Roy.

At delivery, a baby whose mother is suspected of being a meth user is tested immediately through collection of the first stool sample. Positive screens are then reported to the authorities.

In Nevada there currently is no child abuse law protecting an unborn child. A known meth user cannot be charged with child abuse even once the baby is born, said Art Mallory, Churchill County district attorney. Previously, the county used to charge a mother with child abuse when it was determined at birth that the child had been exposed to illegal drugs. However, it was determined by the Nevada Supreme Court to be an improper interpretation of the law.

"There is no feticide law in the Nevada statutes," said Mallory. "We're hoping legislation will do something. There is a bill pending ... in the right to life debate."

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The Division of Child and Family Services is called and the mother and child monitored if a baby is born under the influence of meth. However, the child is not removed immediately unless serious problems exist, said Fallon DCFS officials.

"You would think in a small community there would be less meth use," said Paula Achurra, social welfare manager for DCFS in Fallon. "We take every step we can to help the new infant."

DCFS has to follow strict guidelines in the Nevada Revised Statutes regarding welfare of children, she said.

"We have so many steps to follow," said Achurra. "We try really hard to find family members to help."

Nicole Raymond, a recovering addict, said it is difficult and takes hard work to quit using drugs and alcohol. "I went through treatment four times before it worked for me," she said. "I never gave up on myself."

The rewards she sees now because of her efforts are now paying off, said Tiana Wilson, a case worker at New Frontier Treatment Center in Fallon. Raymond has regained custody of her 4-year-old son, Tyler, and soon will regain custody through a court order of her 7-year-old son. Raymond's oldest son was removed from her care when he was 5 months old and has lived with his grandmother since that time. He is due to move back home when school begins.

Problems associated with meth use upon infants and children of meth users:

- Pre-term labor
- Low birth weight
- Speech problems
- Psychosis
- Irritability
- Detachment disorders
- Damage to brain, kidney, liver, and/or spleen
- Lack of natural social skills
- Seizures
- Tremors
- Other major disabilities

Meth can also be absorbed through the skin and cause

many of the same problems. Scientists are currently working to link more serious birth defects and disabilities to the use of meth in-utero (as reported by [Nevada Appeal](#) on May 26, 2007).

## Studies/Reports

### Methamphetamine Medicine May Cause Brain Damage

[Psych Central](#) reports that a study conducted by experimental scientists at the Boston University School of Medicine have found that a drug commonly used in emergency rooms to treat methamphetamine overdoses may cause damage to nerve cells in an area of the brain which regulates movement.

### Napolitano Unveils New Weapons in the Fight Against Meth

This article in the [Tucson Citizen](#) presents the findings and recommendations of the Arizona Methamphetamine Task Force appointed by Governor Napolitano. The task force calls for increased cooperation between state, local, and federal law enforcement officials to target smuggling.

## Resources

### Crystal Darkness – A Film about Meth

In January of 2007, a 30-minute documentary on methamphetamine, [Crystal Darkness](#), was broadcast simultaneously on almost all television stations across northern Nevada. The result of collaboration between local media, schools, law enforcement, recovery specialists, and the business community, the film has been instrumental in mobilizing the community in the fight against meth. The film can be viewed online, along with information about starting your own local campaign and adopting the film for your local community.

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### **Drugs, Brains, and Behavior – The Science of Addiction**

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, has made available its publication, [Drugs, Brains, and Behavior – The Science of Addiction](#). The booklet describes changes in our understanding of addiction as a brain disease which affects human behavior. The publication is designed to be accessible to educators, professionals in the health and treatment fields, and criminal justice workers.

### **White County Meth Task Force**

The White County Meth Task Force of Cleveland, Georgia is committed to effectively combating the meth epidemic through prevention, education, treatment, and enforcement. As part of their efforts, the task force maintains a website, [Anti-Meth.org](#), which provides information and resources for those involved in community efforts against meth.

### **Surveys**

#### **NACo's Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities Survey Available**

If you are interested in obtaining a hard copy of our July 2006 survey exploring the impact of meth use on local criminal justice systems and the communities they serve, we have a number of copies. To obtain the survey please just contact Justin Carmody at [jcarmody@naco.org](mailto:jcarmody@naco.org) or (202) 942-4279 giving your address and number of copies you would like to receive.

### **Funding**

#### **Edward Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grants Program**

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is now accepting applications for the [Edward Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grants Program](#), designed to fund existing or proposed programs to enhance local efforts to respond to and

prevent crime and drug abuse. Applications are due June 25, 2007.

### **ACF Grants to Fund Programs for Children Affected by Methamphetamine**

The Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau, has announced the [availability of competitive grant funds](#) authorized by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program. The grants will be awarded to regional partnerships which promote interagency collaboration and integration of services to enhance the safety and well-being of children affected by a parent's or other caretaker's methamphetamine or other substance abuse. Applications are due July 3, 2007.

### **COPS 2007 Meth Initiative Funding**

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has announced the [availability of funding](#) for law enforcement agencies in targeted jurisdictions who demonstrate a clear plan for implementing comprehensive anti-meth strategies. Applications are due June 29, 2007.

### **Events/Training Opportunities**

#### **July 2007 PESI Seminars on The Meth Epidemic**

*PESI, LLC. Date: July 25 – 27, 2007. Location: Towson, MD, Columbia, MD, and Fairfax, VA*

In July 2007, PESI will lead a series of seminars on the meth epidemic in Towson, MD (July 25), Columbia, MD (July 26), and Fairfax, VA (July 27). Each seminar will provide information about methamphetamine and approaches to prevent relapse and re-arrest. Information on the seminar and registration is available in their [online brochure](#).

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## **14<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Drugs and Crime**

*National Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC). Date: October 14-17, 2007. Location: Westminster, Colorado*

This year's conference will emphasize community efforts to aid successful recovery and reentry and will include a session on methamphetamine. Information and registration are available [online](#).

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](mailto: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](http://www.naco.org).