

THE METH PROJECT

New Report by State of Montana Shows Teen Meth Usage Has Declined by 63% Since 2005

Data Released by the Montana Office of Public Instruction in Cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Shows Significant Decreases in Meth Use Among Teens

MISSOULA, Mont.—July 1, 2009—Montana's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, released this week by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, has found that Meth use among teens in the state has dropped by 63%ⁱ since 2005, when the Meth Project first launched its prevention campaign. The survey is conducted every two years by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, in cooperation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new YRBS findings reflect other data released by the Montana State Attorney General's Office and other state agencies, which have shown significant declines in Meth use during the same period. Between 2005 and 2007, there was a 72%ⁱⁱ decrease in workers testing positive for Meth. Between 2005 and 2008, Meth-related crime dropped by 62%ⁱⁱⁱ, Meth-related treatment admissions declined 34%^{iv} and Meth-related foster care placements decreased 11%.^v A recent 2009 report by the State Attorney General's office estimates that costs associated with the methamphetamine problem in Montana, which peaked at more than \$300 million in 2005, have decreased \$100 million over the past three years.^{vi}

"The 63% decrease in teen meth use reported by the state and the CDC continues a trend we have seen since the launch of the Montana Meth Project in 2005," said Montana Meth Project chairman Mike Gulledge. "Four years ago, we realized that if Montana was going to eradicate its Meth problem we needed to launch a research-based prevention effort that would capture the attention of our young people and stop them from ever trying the drug. The result was the Montana Meth Project, which has had demonstrated success in educating Montana's young people about the dangers of Meth use. The program has exceeded all expectations and I commend the people of the state of Montana for making it possible."

"The hard work of communities throughout our state is paying off—without a doubt meth threatened to become an epidemic, but Montanans stood up to it," said Montana Attorney General Steve Bullock. "The drop in meth use amongst teens is great news, and I want to personally thank the Meth Project, law enforcement and community leaders from across the state. But our work is not done—we need to remain vigilant in fighting drug abuse in our communities."

"In addition to the severe human toll on families and communities, the RAND Corporation recently estimated that Meth use costs the United States more than \$23 billion per year," said Denny Rehberg, a member of the House Appropriations Committee. "The Meth Project model works. In Montana, teen use is now down 63%, and we are making significant progress in eradicating this devastating drug from states across the nation. That's one of the reasons the funding I've secured to help the Montana Meth Project fight back is a good investment. Since the Montana Meth Project launched in 2005, the results have been overwhelmingly positive, attitudes and behaviors toward Meth are changing and changing dramatically. I am proud to have

lead the effort to establish this important program.”

Commenting on the new report and the need for continued focus, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, Montana’s senior member in the United States Senate, said, “Meth is a scourge on our state, and we need to stamp it out. Working together with the Montana Meth Project, as well as individuals, law enforcement, and other groups across the state, we have made good progress on getting rid of this destructive drug. But we still have more to do, and I am committed to working together until we get this drug off our streets, away from our kids, and out of our communities.”

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is biennial, national school-based survey designed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor priority health-risk behaviors.

The 2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey was conducted in February 2009 by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Montana YRBS results are based on a random sample of 1,800 high school students from 47 schools throughout the state. Over 12,000 additional Montana high school students not selected for the random sample voluntarily participated in the 2009 YRBS. The results are representative of all students in grades 9 through 12 in Montana.

About the Meth Project

The Meth Project is 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. First implemented in Montana as the Montana Meth Project, the program has demonstrated significant results in changing attitudes and behaviors toward Meth. The Meth Project is funded by a grant from the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation. For more information, visit www.methproject.org.

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i Montana Office of Public Instruction, *2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey*. June 2009.
ii Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. *Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-Up Report on Trends and Progress*. March 2008.
iii Ibid.
iv Ibid.
v Ibid.
vi Office of the Attorney General, *The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in Montana*. February 2009