

Policy and Practice



A Quarterly Publication for Criminal Justice Policymakers and Practitioners

Published by the National Criminal Justice Association, 444 N Capitol St., NW, Suite 618, Washington, DC 20001

The Rising Methamphetamine Crisis: An Examination of State Responses

Introduction

In recent years, the increase in production, distribution and use of methamphetamine has become a matter of considerable concern for public safety officials, public health administrators and policymakers. Although the methamphetamine problem is primarily a phenomenon of Western and Southwestern states, it has the potential to reach and affect the rest of the United States because of the relative ease with which the drug can be manufactured and the potential for violence associated with methamphetamine abuse. The hazardous materials used to create the drug also pose a serious danger and threat to public safety. Because of the increasing incidents of methamphetamine-related violence and the discovery of clandestine labs in urban and rural areas of the country, methamphetamine has been dubbed the “crack” of the 1990s.

This issue of the National Criminal Justice Association’s (NCJA) *Policy and Practice* presents an overview of state and federal responses to the methamphetamine problem and highlights recent trends in prevention, treatment and legislative activity that address the concerns of state and local government officials. The responses, initiatives and strategies adopted by selected states – Wyoming, Iowa and California will be featured, as well as a brief overview of the federal government’s efforts to combat the problem of methamphetamine use. The purpose of this issue is to increase awareness of methamphetamine’s destructive impact on communities and to provide valuable information for practitioners and policymakers. The perspectives and viewpoints expressed in this *Policy and Practice* do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of the NCJA, nor does the NCJA endorse specific strategies or initiatives employed by the state or federal agencies and organizations represented.

What Is Methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine, commonly known by the street names “meth,” “speed” and “chalk,” is a powerful, addictive, central nervous system stimulant. It is a white, odorless, bitter-tasting crystalline powder that is soluble

SPRING 1999
VOLUME 2, No. 1

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Policy and Practice

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Acknowledgments

This *Policy and Practice* reflects the skill and diligent work of the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) staff and the NCJA members and state officials who generously contributed their time to the development of this publication.

The NCJA staff is grateful to Ron Gravitt, special agent supervisor, California State Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Program; Thomas J. Pagel, director, Wyoming Office of the Attorney General, Division of Criminal Investigation; Capt. Peter F. Warren, Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police, Statewide Narcotics Task Force; and Dale Woolery, acting director, Governor's Alliance on Substance Abuse (Ia.) for graciously offering their time to provide valuable insights and review drafts.

Finally, the NCJA would like to acknowledge the hard work of the following staff members: Associate Director for Legal Affairs Lisa Doyle Moran; Senior Staff Associate Elizabeth A. Pearson; Staff Associate Shaun E. Bernier; and Administrative Assistant Carolyn J. Reid.

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in water or alcohol. Methamphetamine can be injected, smoked, snorted or ingested orally. In its smoked form, it is commonly referred to as "ice," "crystal," "crank" and "glass." According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) report, titled, "Methamphetamine Abuse and Addiction," methamphetamine was developed early in the 20th century from its parent drug, amphetamine. Originally, it was developed as an ingredient in nasal decongestants and bronchial inhalers. Like amphetamine, methamphetamine use causes increased activity, decreased appetite and a general sense of well-being. Unlike amphetamine, however, the effects of methamphetamine use can last six to eight hours, and after an initial "rush," users typically enter a state of extreme agitation which can lead to violent behavior in some individuals.

The physiological effects of methamphetamine include increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature and breathing rate. In addition, methamphetamine use results in dilated pupils, increased alertness, heightened euphoria and a sense of increased energy. Methamphetamine abusers frequently experience aggressive behavior, anxiety, auditory hallucinations and paranoia. In addition, withdrawal from the drug produces severe depression. Given the severity of these side effects, methamphetamine can be a lethal, dangerous, and unpredictable drug, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

The DEA reports that methamphetamine users suffer the same addiction and withdrawal patterns as crack cocaine users. After prolonged use, an individual can enter the "binging" phase, characterized by continuous drug consumption for days without sleep. Subsequently, the user falls into a period known as "tweaking," characterized by severe depression, heightened paranoia and aggression. According to the DEA, methamphetamine produces a reaction that is more severe than crack cocaine, with binge and tweak episodes and sleeplessness that can last up to 15 days. In comparison to cocaine, which rapidly metabolizes in the body, it can take the body up to two days to eliminate a single methamphetamine dose.

Although methamphetamine use reaches all social, racial and economic strata, typical users tend to be male and Caucasian. Law enforcement officials have found that methamphetamine users fall into two basic profiles: 1) students, both high school and college, and 2) Caucasian, blue collar workers or unemployed and underemployed persons in their twenties. However, in recent years, methamphetamine use has become increasingly popular with females who are attracted to the drug for its energizing and appetite suppressant effects.

The volatile nature of the drug raises serious public health concerns because of its effects on methamphetamine abusers. In the Phoenix area, methamphetamine-related deaths increased more than six times from 1992 to 1994, with 20 and 122 deaths, respectively. From 1992 to 1993, methamphetamine-related emergency room episodes increased 48 percent in the Los Angeles area. In addition, law enforcement has reported that methamphetamine is involved in 89 percent of domestic dispute cases in Contra Costa County, Calif.

Evolution, Production and Distribution

Methamphetamine is either manufactured in clandestine labs domestically, or it and its precursor chemicals are smuggled into the United States

from Mexico. One method of production, the ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction method, requires use of the precursor chemicals ephedrine or pseudoephedrine. This method accounted for 89 percent of methamphetamine lab seizures by the DEA in 1995. According to the DEA, the ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction method was also the most common method used by drug traffickers in Mexico. The other method uses the precursor chemical phenyl-2-propane, commonly called P2P. According to the DEA, the ephedrine/pseudoephedrine reduction method is preferred over the P2P method because it has a simpler route of synthesis, the precursor chemicals are less strictly controlled than P2P and it produces a more potent form of methamphetamine. However, P2P can be manufactured easily in clandestine laboratories from phenylacetic acid, or derivatives of common household chemicals like ammonia, over the counter cold and asthma medications containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, drain cleaner, battery acid, lye, lantern fuel and antifreeze.

According to the DEA, clandestine laboratories pose a significant threat and danger to public health and safety. The clandestine labs are increasingly operated in single or multifamily homes, garages, barns and vehicles in urban and suburban neighborhoods. Laboratory operators, or "cooks," often have no knowledge of the chemicals and most often produce methamphetamine from handwritten recipes or underground publications obtained through fellow inmates during periods of incarceration, or from recipes obtained through the World Wide Web. Hazardous chemical wastes, the by-products of producing methamphetamine, are often disposed by unsafe and illegal means – dumped into bathtubs, sinks or toilets, on the ground, into nearby lakes or streams, or buried underground.

These common practices potentially contaminate surface and groundwater, which could affect large numbers of people. In addition, cleaning up seized clandestine labs is an extremely complex, dangerous and time-consuming process. Special training in appropriate health and safety procedures is crucial because many of the chemical materials are reactive, explosive, flammable, corrosive and toxic.

According to a 1996 report released by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), National Narcotics Intelligence Consumer's Committee (NNICC), methamphetamine trafficking and abuse in the United States has been on the rise in recent years. According to the report, titled, "The Supply of Illicit Drugs to the United States," methamphetamine trafficking is increasing in the Southwest, Midwest and

Common Household Products Used In Methamphetamine Production

- Cold tablet containers that list ephedrine or pseudoephedrine as ingredients;
- Bottles or jars with rubber tubing attached, such as gasoline cans and sports drink bottles;
- Unusually large numbers of cans containing kerosene, paint thinner, acetone starting fluid, lye, household drain cleaners, denatured alcohol and lighter fluid; and
- Large amounts of lithium batteries (stripped).

Chemical Indicators of Methamphetamine Production

- Jars containing a clear liquid with a white-colored solid on the bottom;
- Jars containing iodine or dark, shiny, metallic, purple crystals;
- Jars labeled as containing red phosphorous (fine, dark red or purple powder), or sulfuric, hydrochloric or muriatic acid;
- Soft silver or gray metallic ribbon stored in oil or kerosene; and
- Propane tanks with fittings that have turned blue.

Methamphetamine-Related Activity

- Occupants of residence going outside to smoke;
- Strong smells of urine, ether, ammonia or acetone;
- Residences with windows blackened out; and
- Heightened traffic at night, increased numbers of people entering and leaving the premises.

Sources:

"Clandestine Laboratory Awareness," DEA.

"Is There A Meth Lab Cookin' In Your Neighborhood?" Koch Crime Institute, (Mo.), http://www.kci.org/meth_info/neighborhood_lab.htm.



Southeast regions of the country. Historically, methamphetamine suppliers have been motorcycle gangs and other independent trafficking groups. The report states that while these groups continue to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine, Mexico-based criminal organizations have revolutionized methamphetamine production in large-scale laboratories in Mexico and the United States. According to the report, the dominant source of methamphetamine supply in the West, Midwest and other regions of the United States is California-based laboratories controlled by organized crime drug trafficking groups operating from Mexico.

These criminal organizations also dominate the production and trafficking of other illicit drugs from Mexico into the United States and have demonstrated flexibility in modifying smuggling routes to adapt to any drug. The criminal organizations include a network of Mexican nationals residing in Mexico and the United States, Mexican-Americans coordinating drug trafficking activity on either side of the border, and illegal aliens residing in the United States. The report also contends that the involvement of Mexican criminal organizations have expanded the methamphetamine market eastward.

Several possible reasons account for the increasing prevalence of methamphetamine in the Western, Southwestern and now Midwestern states. The report identified several states as areas dominated by Mexican organized crime drug groups, including: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas and Washington.

According to Thomas J. Pagel, director, Wyoming Office of the Attorney General, Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), the geographic proximity of California and Southwestern states like Arizona to the Mexican border attributes to the ease in smuggling precursor chemicals into the United States. Dale Woolery, acting director of Iowa's Governor's Alliance on Substance Abuse (GASA), attributes the ease of increased methamphetamine trafficking activity into rural and agricultural regions of Midwestern states to the remote interstate highway system that crosses through several Midwest states. Woolery also commented that it is likely that drug traffickers see an untapped methamphetamine market in the Midwest, compared to the Eastern and Southeastern states, where the drug markets are saturated with other available drugs.

Resources For Law Enforcement Education and Training

“Developing a Strategy for a Multiagency Response to Clandestine Drug Laboratories,” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Monograph, June 1998. This publication is designed to assist state and local law enforcement to plan, organize and manage a comprehensive clandestine lab enforcement program. The monograph addresses the strategy planning process to assist policymakers in formulating program components and provides a framework by which agencies can model a program tailored to their needs and resources. The publication is available from the BJA clearinghouse at tel. (800) 688-4252, refer to NCJ 142643.

Clandestine Laboratory Awareness, DEA. This serves as a guide for law enforcement to achieve awareness of a clandestine lab's existence. Included in the guide is information on the tell-tale indicators of clandestine lab activity, what types of chemicals and commercial products are commonly found in the labs and how to identify booby-traps established by clandestine lab operators. For further information, contact the DEA Clan Lab School, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135.

“Chemical Time Bombs,” DEA. This 25-minute video details in-depth procedures in dismantling clandestine laboratories and highlights fundamental rules for safety. The training video is only available for law enforcement agencies and officers. To obtain a video, contact the DEA, Methamphetamine Program, “Operation Velocity,” at 700 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202; tel.: (202) 307-4653.

State Responses to the Methamphetamine Problem

In light of these issues stemming from methamphetamine use, production and distribution, several states have initiated law enforcement responses to combat its ascending prevalence. In recent years, several Midwestern states have witnessed the emerging growth of methamphetamine clandestine labs and methamphetamine-related incidents of violence and drug abuse. As a result, these states also have developed prevention and treatment strategies. In addition to studying the responses in Wyoming, Iowa, and California, this *Policy and Practice* also will discuss a methamphetamine prevention approach in Connecticut adopted to circumvent the potential of its infiltration into Eastern states.

Wyoming

Increasing methamphetamine-related arrests and criminal investigations in Wyoming indicate that methamphetamine have made the drug and its prevalence a primary concern among law enforcement. According to the DCI statistics, there are more arrests

in Wyoming involving the use of methamphetamine than marijuana or any other drug. Methamphetamine-related arrests (including use and drug trafficking) grew from approximately 18 percent of all drug arrests in 1993 to 50 percent in 1997. In addition, since 1993, the number of methamphetamine investigations increased from approximately 30 cases to 132 cases in 1998. By comparison, arrests for other drugs decreased within the same period. For example, in 1993, marijuana and cocaine arrests accounted for approximately 57 and 29 percent, respectively, of the total drug arrests in the state. In 1997, drug arrests for marijuana accounted for approximately 34 percent of arrests, while arrests for cocaine decreased to 7 percent.

Officials suspect that there is a correlation between the rapid increase in methamphetamine-related incidents and the rise in assault and drug-related arrests. The implications of the data are dramatic, according to Pagel. In terms of the drug's effect on users, Pagel said that violence is often the result of using methamphetamine – particularly when the drug begins to wear off. "At this point in time, the user is so aggressive and so agitated, that is when these bizarre murders, bizarre mutilations and bizarre crimes take place. The individual at this

Bureau of Justice Assistance Training Programs. Through a service provider, the BJA offers three courses on clandestine laboratory enforcement, investigation and clean up. Instructors tailor course content to meet specific needs of any jurisdiction, locality, region or state. The courses prepare participants in understanding the hazards of clandestine laboratories and provides information on reducing the risks of on-site injuries during investigations and also target law enforcement supervisors and managers who are interested in developing multi-agency approaches in effective lab enforcement and cleanup programs. For program registration and course descriptions, contact Circle Solutions, Inc., 2070 Chain Bridge Rd., Ste. 450, Vienna, VA 22182, or access its Internet site at <http://www.circsol.com/clanlab>.

State and Local Safety Certification School (SALC). The DEA provides a one-week training course for state and local law enforcement officers and forensic chemists that certifies participants per Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards 29 CFR 1910.120 to work in hazardous environments. The course curriculum is a modification of a similar school conducted for DEA agents. Participants receive certificates of compliance to OSHA standards as well as a set of protective clothing, equipment and materials, books and training manuals for future use. Contact the DEA Clan Lab School, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135, for further information.

Clandestine Laboratory Investigation Program. The California Department of Justice, Advanced Training Center, offers a series of courses in clandestine lab investigation and safety, hazardous environment safety certification and instructor training for law enforcement and fire safety personnel in identifying and dismantling clandestine labs. Information on the programs are available by contacting the California Department of Justice, Advanced Training Center, 4949 Broadway, Room E-131, Sacramento, CA 95820; tel.: (916) 227-3225.



point is virtually out of control.”

Statistics from the DCI reveal that the number of adult and juvenile assault and drug arrests grew significantly since 1993. For example, the number of adult drug arrests increased from 761 in 1993, to 1,413 in 1997. Similarly, juvenile drug arrests increased from 111 in 1993 to 360 in 1997. Adult assault arrests increased from 2,038 arrests in 1993 to 2,385 arrests in 1996. Similarly, juvenile assault arrests increased from 335 arrests to 471 arrests in the same time period. In addition, the DCI reports that overall, assault, domestic violence-related incidents and the majority of other assault incidents involve substance abuse at the time of arrest. Relying on anecdotal evidence from law enforcement officials, Pagel noted that, “There is no doubt that there is a link between domestic violence, violent crime and methamphetamine use.” In Wyoming, there has been a 151-percent increase in other assault arrests (which included domestic violence-related incidents) in the past 10 years, from 196 arrests per 100,000 in 1987-89 to 491 arrests per 100,000 in 1995-97.

In 1998, Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer (R) asked the DCI to develop a comprehensive plan designed to combat the use and availability of methamphetamine in the state. The Wyoming Methamphetamine Initiative called for increasing the number of law enforcement agents dedicated to enforcing methamphetamine laws, more drug treatment personnel to handle increasing caseloads, improved treatment provider training, expanded resources for counseling and treatment and a heightened public awareness campaign regarding the dangers of methamphetamine. Specific components of the Wyoming Methamphetamine Initiative also include:

- additional DCI agents in Southwest and Northwest Wyoming;
- additional highway patrolmen on Interstate 80;
- equipment that provides for faster analysis of controlled substances;
- an additional forensic chemist in the DCI crime lab to address the backlog of cases that has developed over the past five years and created delays in other areas of the justice process;
- the addition of several substance abuse counselors for the state penitentiary and other state penal facilities;

- expanded programs for educational, preventive and treatment interventions, including community intensive outpatient services, a jail-based intervention program and intensive residential treatment programs;
- creation of a long-term residential program;
- creation of a program for probationers and parolees who experience substance abuse problems that calls for more intensive supervision and frequent drug testing; and
- implementation of updated training to all treatment providers, the state’s Department of Family Services staff, probation and parole officers, school counselors and administrators.

According to Pagel, the Wyoming Methamphetamine Initiative was appropriated approximately \$3 million by the state legislature in fiscal year 1998 and so far, has been successful in following through with several of its components. Of special note, is the treatment continuum component of the initiative, which places drug treatment at the front end of a prison sentence for persons convicted of a drug or drug-related charge. The treatment continuum allows for a variety of ways a methamphetamine-addicted inmate can receive treatment for substance abuse. At every phase in the incarceration continuum, an inmate can receive individually tailored treatment through the Department of Corrections’ drug counseling program in an intensive treatment unit or state hospital secure unit. Upon release, the individual is transitioned back into the community through a revocation treatment alternative program, and is monitored by the cooperative efforts of parole or probation officers.

Persons who are not incarcerated can be placed into community outpatient treatment programs, which provide alternatives for outpatient counseling such as: an intensive outpatient program (short- and long-term residential programs), halfway house transition, outpatient aftercare counseling and relapse prevention treatment. According to Pagel, it is crucial to provide the appropriate treatment – making careful assessments to ensure that a person less involved with illegal drugs enters a less intense to a moderately intense program.

A treatment continuum strategy for juveniles closely mirrors the adult treatment strategy. In 1997, approximately 10 percent of Wyoming high school seniors reported they used methamphetamine, compared to approximately 3 percent of high school seniors nationally, according a DCI survey. In the same survey, approximately 5 percent of Wyoming

eighth graders reported using methamphetamine within the last year.

In response to the rising tide of reported methamphetamine use, arrests and clandestine lab investigations, the state of Wyoming enhanced penalties for methamphetamine offenses, according to Pagel. For example, the state legislature enacted penalties for operating methamphetamine labs and for the possession of tools and materials used for the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Iowa

In recent years, the state of Iowa has experienced an increase in its methamphetamine problem. Because of Iowa's unique geographic location, with two intersecting interstate highways, it is a vulnerable target for domestic methamphetamine production in rural areas and distribution to and from other states. Data from the Iowa Department of Public Safety, Division of Narcotics Enforcement (DNE) indicate that methamphetamine is and will continue to be a primary concern among enforcement officials. In 1998, agents from the DNE seized 155 pounds of methamphetamine, up from 117 pounds in 1997 and 10 pounds in 1994. In 1994, clandestine labs were virtually nonexistent; only two labs were discovered that year. By 1997 and 1998, agents shut down 63 and 320 labs, respectively.

Furthermore, Woolery notes that the number of clients seeking treatment at state-funded treatment centers for methamphetamine abuse increased from 2 percent in 1994 to 12 percent in 1997. In terms of drug arrests, Woolery stated that there has been a significant increase in the number of drug arrests since 1994, including methamphetamine-specific arrests. Given these alarming trends, Iowa has responded in a variety of ways to combat the emerging and explosive growth in methamphetamine use and related arrests.

In January 1999, Gov. Tom Vilsack (D-Iowa) unveiled a \$4 million education and treatment package targeted to halt methamphetamine abuse. The most stringent aspect of the package is a sentencing proposal that would require a 99-year sentence for those who manufacture and sell methamphetamine to minors. According to the DNE, 90 percent of the methamphetamine consumed in Iowa is manufactured elsewhere and smuggled into the state. Policymakers and the governor sought enhanced penalties of this nature, believing that the possibility of a life term in prison would make methamphet-

amine dealers more likely to cooperate with authorities in identifying other dealers in the drug business.

Other initiatives in the governor's proposal include hiring new lab specialists for the Criminal Investigations Division of the state attorney general's office, creating a 13-member "lab response" team to disassemble clandestine labs, spending \$1.25 million to expand and lengthen treatment time for methamphetamine addicts, revising education curriculum to include methamphetamine education and placing similar programs in the workplace, and developing community-based programs for local efforts in combating the drug.

Currently, the Iowa state legislature is considering other proposals to enhance sentencing penalties for methamphetamine production and distribution. Several initiatives pending before the Iowa legislature include:

- Increasing the penalty for first- or second-time offenders convicted of methamphetamine possession to a class D felony (House File 157);
- Increasing the penalty for methamphetamine production and distribution to minors, and restricting a defendant's ability to post bond when charged with or convicted of either manufacturing or delivering more than five grams of methamphetamine (House File 118);
- Increasing the penalties for distribution of and possession with intent to deliver methamphetamine to minors and removing methamphetamine distribution from the list of offenses eligible for sentence reductions for a first conviction; and
- Appropriating funds to the Iowa Department of Justice, Department of Public Safety, and the GASA for various methamphetamine-related activities and increasing the penalty for tampering with anhydrous ammonia equipment and illegal possession of anhydrous ammonia.

Iowa has launched a statewide public awareness campaign to educate communities about the dangers of methamphetamine. The primary goal of the media campaign and public service messages on television, radio and in print media is to make methamphetamine part of the Iowa citizen's vocabulary, according to Woolery. A second goal is to help citizens recognize and identify methamphetamine activity in their communities. Throughout Iowa, town forums sponsored by local law enforcement and educators provide information on what methamphetamine



looks like, how it is made and how to identify the odor associated with clandestine lab activity.

In 1998, a mobile methamphetamine exhibit traveled throughout Iowa in a stock car trailer formerly used as a clandestine lab. The exhibit included a mock clandestine lab, an interactive computer kiosk, audio and video presentations and literature on methamphetamine. The exhibit provided training to parents, teachers, hospital workers and law enforcement on how to recognize and respond to clandestine lab activity in their neighborhoods. According to Woolery, the significant increase in the number of clandestine lab investigations between 1997 and 1998 was attributed, in part, to increased skills and awareness of law enforcement as well as to citizen tips.

Continuing efforts in public awareness include the MethEd Project, a joint effort between the state of Iowa and the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which is supported by the Office of National Drug Control and Prevention (ONDCP). The MethEd Project involves drug curriculum development targeting middle-school age children. The key philosophy behind the project is to target prevention and education efforts to a younger audience and present the dangers of methamphetamine use through an interactive computer software pro-

gram. In doing so, the GASA will develop a mobile methamphetamine learning center that will include a 30-workstation computer laboratory, and will travel throughout the state and reach communities that may lack the resources to provide the drug curriculum in their school districts. According to Woolery, the MidWest HIDTA is funding software development, while the state will fund the creation of the mobile learning center.

California

Since the 1980s, California has experienced high levels of methamphetamine-related incidents of violence and clandestine lab activity. According to data from the California Laboratory Enforcement Program (CLEP), which is operated by the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (CBNE), approximately 3,063 clandestine labs were seized by the state and/or other law enforcement agencies in the last five years. In 1997 alone, 946 clandestine labs were seized by law enforcement and by 1998, the number of labs seized by law enforcement amounted to 1,006. Approximately 90 percent of the labs produced methamphetamine; the other 10 percent accounted for other illegal drugs, including ephedrine, cocaine and PCP.

In San Diego County, methamphetamine is reportedly the most commonly abused drug for persons entering treatment programs, accounting for approximately 45 percent of treatment admissions. In San

Federal Efforts to Combat Methamphetamine Trends

The National Methamphetamine Strategy: Initiated by President Bill Clinton in 1996, the federal Methamphetamine Strategy addresses the emerging methamphetamine threat and provides a framework for a coordinated government-wide response. The national strategy outlines a series of implementation goals for enforcement activities, regulatory controls, international initiatives, sentencing and legislative initiatives, prosecutor and investigator training and education, prevention and treatment programs. Annual updates on the national strategy are issued by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General.

The Comprehensive Methamphetamine Control Act of 1996: Signed into law on Oct. 3, 1996, the act incorporated many elements of the *National Methamphetamine Strategy*—including increased penalties and regulatory provisions for precursor chemicals. More specifically, the act charged the U.S. Sentencing Commission to increase penalties for methamphetamine and precursor chemical trafficking. The Act also mandated that the sentencing commission consider penalty enhancements for laboratory operators who mishandle flammable, corrosive, reactive and toxic chemicals that pose a risk to public safety and the environment.

MidWest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA): The MidWest HIDTA is composed of five states: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Dakota. It was created in 1996 by the Office of National

Francisco, methamphetamine ranks as the third most commonly abused drug of clients admitted into drug treatment programs. In addition, methamphetamine ranks as the second primary abused drug in Los Angeles.

California has experienced a high number of injuries and fatalities stemming from clandestine lab explosions and fires. According to Ron Gravitt, special agent supervisor of the CLEP, approximately one in six methamphetamine labs resulted in explosions in 1997. Given the extraordinary amount of clandestine lab discoveries, there is a great potential risk for harm and injury to the neighborhoods where labs operate. A high profile incident in Riverside County involved the burning death of child as a result of a methamphetamine lab explosion in a kitchen where the child's mother was cooking a batch of methamphetamine on the stove. The child's parents did not allow neighbors to rescue the child for fear that the methamphetamine lab would be discovered.

Finding children at methamphetamine labs is not uncommon in California. The CBNE reports that it encounters 1,600 to 2,400 children per year in drug labs. Children are typically under the age of 13 and are often found to have bruises, abrasions and sporadic bald spots on their heads. Thirty-five percent of the children tested positive for heavy metals when tested by local child-protection services.

As the number of clandestine labs increased, it

became apparent that proper equipment and training was necessary to address the health dangers associated with their emergence. The California Environmental Protection Agency (CAL/EPA) developed a program in 1995 that reduced the responsibility of law enforcement for cleanups of clandestine labs because it may not have the necessary experience, equipment or funding to thoroughly address the hazardous, toxic nature of the chemical wastes. The program also relies on multidisciplinary cooperation in the cleanup process, including assistance from fire safety officials, health agency administrators, task forces and emergency medical services technicians. CAL/EPA relies on its HAZMAT experience and views clandestine labs as hazardous waste sites that require emergency response. CAL/EPA conducts an inventory of sites and abandonments and waste that is dumped along roads or left at the labs.

With regard to prevention efforts, California has focused on an anti-methamphetamine media education campaign. Since 1998, a series of television, radio and billboard advertisements illustrates the degenerative effects of methamphetamine use, the impact of environmental devastation caused by methamphetamine labs, and the dangers posed to family members and neighbors wherever there are "meth cooks." The media campaign attempts to saturate the California public with information on the growing methamphetamine menace. The radio and billboard advertisements direct audiences to an

Drug Policy Control (ONDCP) to reduce and disrupt production, distribution and importation of methamphetamine in the five state region and other areas of the United States. The MidWest HIDTA offers funding enhancements for cooperative efforts, intelligence sharing, resource pooling and development and implementation of regional strategies.

ONDCP: The ONDCP's annual *National Drug Control Strategy* assesses and evaluates methamphetamine and other illegal substance trends nationwide. Methamphetamine treatment and prevention of use are included in the strategy's overall demand and supply reduction efforts.

The COPS Methamphetamine Initiative: In 1998, the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) developed the Methamphetamine Initiative. The program provides community policing grants to law enforcement agencies in areas with high levels of methamphetamine activity. The COPS Methamphetamine Initiative funds support a variety of enforcement, intervention and prevention efforts. Thus far, six jurisdictions have been invited to participate: Phoenix, Ariz.; Little Rock, Ark.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Dallas, Texas; and Salt Lake City, Utah.



interactive California state Web site, <http://www.stopdrugs.org>, which gives extensive information on methamphetamine and other drugs.

In January 1999, the California state attorney general's office released two educational videos, in English and Spanish, that are designed to further educate the public on the dangers of methamphetamine. One video, "Meth, the Great Deceiver," targets a teen audience and delivers facts and true anecdotes recounting the violence and destruction stemming from the use of the drug. The second video, "Where Meth Goes, Violence and Destruction Follow!" targets a general audience and outlines the violence, child abuse, social and economic damage caused by the drug. Complimentary copies of the two videos and companion guides were sent to more than 3,000 law enforcement agencies, district attorney offices, public and continuation high schools, county offices of education, probation departments, school/law enforcement partnership groups, county drug and alcohol program administrators, and various community-based nonprofit organizations.

With funds appropriated by the federal 1998 Commerce, Justice and Senate Appropriations Bill, the California Department of Justice implemented the California Methamphetamine Strategy (CALMS) which included plans for increasing the numbers of

law enforcement, intelligence and forensic agents, providing training and safety equipment for special agents and law enforcement, and developing more public education and prevention materials to schools and community organizations. According to Gravitt, the CLEP will use the federal funding to hire more special agents to concentrate enforcement efforts on drug trafficking operations through Mexican drug organizations and rogue chemical companies who sell precursor chemicals to methamphetamine manufacturers.

Also, the California state legislature is considering a bill that would schedule methamphetamine as a Schedule I controlled substance – thereby increasing the penalties for methamphetamine offenses.

Eastern States

Much attention has focused on the rising methamphetamine trends in the Western and Southwestern states, and for good reason. Increased reported incidents of clandestine lab activity, lab explosions and methamphetamine-related treatment in Western, Southwestern and now Midwestern states indicate an eastward-moving trend across the United States. Last year, states such as Georgia, Minnesota, Missouri and Nebraska reported escalating levels of methamphetamine activity, indicating a gradual shift from Mid-

Video Documentary Features Underground World of Methamphetamine

KPBS Radio and Television (San Diego, Calif.) released a documentary titled, "Methamphetamine: From the Streets of San Diego," highlighting how methamphetamine is linked with the city's history and recent burst of high-profile violent crimes – there were more than 8,600 drug arrests for the sale and possession of the drug in San Diego.

The video documented that in 1995, a 35-year-old plumber high on methamphetamine, drove an army tank down California State Route 163 and was subsequently killed by police after the tank ran over a center divider. In addition, a four-year-old child was scalded to death while her aunt and uncle were high on methamphetamine. The child's mother was in a drug treatment facility for addiction to methamphetamine while the aunt and uncle looked after the child. In 1997, a San Diego city bus was hijacked by an individual after a four-day methamphetamine binge.

The video documentary featured clips from some of the city's most highly-profiled incidents and presented an overview of how the drug has infiltrated the region's courts, emergency rooms and jails with methamphetamine-related cases. Interviews with former addicts, a methamphetamine "cook" and police footage, provided an in-depth portrait of the methamphetamine situation in San Diego. Copies of the video, "Methamphetamine: From the Streets of San Diego," are available by contacting the KPBS television and radio station at tel.: (800) 266-5727, or by accessing its Web site at <http://www.kpbs/methhome.html>.

west states to the East Coast. Gravitt notes that methamphetamine is slowly making its way from California and moving across the country and predicts that "within the next two years, methamphetamine will be the drug of choice in America."

In response to the potential threat of methamphetamine spreading to the East Coast, Connecticut's Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police, Statewide Narcotics Task Force is preparing the state for dealing with a possible methamphetamine problem. Although the state had its first-ever reported methamphetamine-related arrest in February 1999, efforts began in 1998 to educate and train the law enforcement community on methamphetamine, the hazards associated with methamphetamine labs and health issues confronting narcotic investigators who are exposed to these labs. Capt. Peter F. Warren, of the Statewide Narcotics Task Force, has spearheaded an annual methamphetamine seminar to teach law enforcement officers from Connecticut and neighboring states how to identify a methamphetamine lab, how to practice on-the-scene safety measures and to learn investigative raid techniques related to methamphetamine.

Instructors from a variety of agencies, including the DEA and states currently experiencing an increase in the methamphetamine problem, are brought to Connecticut to teach a week-long seminar. According to Warren, a number of New England and Middle Atlantic states participated in the 1998 seminar and have already registered to participate again in 1999. The key philosophy behind developing the annual seminar is to prepare and educate law enforcement and fire training officers in Connecticut and other Eastern states in light of methamphetamine's rapid spread from the West coast to the Midwest. Warren said the repercussions on law enforcement and public safety would be detrimental if the problems of clandestine labs and drug trafficking emerged in a state that is unprepared and uneducated about the hazards associated with methamphetamine.

Conclusion

Given the alarming number of methamphetamine arrests, clandestine lab seizures and increasing rates of violence and threats to public safety, it is clear that state administrators may need to closely monitor and examine drug trends in their state. Despite each state's unique geographic and demographic conditions, there remains a strong possibility that the

growth of methamphetamine production and distribution will increase in the coming years if states do not begin and continue education, enforcement and legislative efforts to combat the disturbing trend.

Resources

State Contacts

Ron Gravitt, special agent supervisor, California State Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Program, 4949 Broadway St., Rm. C-215, Sacramento, CA 94280; tel.: (916) 227-4044; <http://www.stopdrugs.org>

Thomas J. Pagel, director, Wyoming Office of the Attorney General, Division of Criminal Investigation, Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation, 316 West 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82002; tel.: (307) 777-7181; <http://www.state.wy.state.us/~ag/>

Capt. Peter F. Warren, Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Division of State Police, Statewide Narcotics Task Force, 1111 Country Club Road, P.O. Box 2794, Middletown, CT 06457-9294; tel.: (203) 238-6616; <http://www.state.ct.us/dps/>

Dale Woolery, acting director, Governor's Alliance Substance Abuse, Lucas State Office Building, 2nd Floor, Des Moines, IA 50319; tel.: (515) 281-4518; <http://www.state.ia.us/government/dps/dne/>

Other Contacts

Guy Hargreaves, special agent supervisor, U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Methamphetamine Program "Operation Velocity," 700 Army-Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202; tel.: (202) 307-4653

Jackie Long, special agent supervisor, California State Department of Justice, Advanced Training Center, 4949 Broadway, Room E-131, Sacramento, CA 95820; tel.: (916) 227-3225

Michael S. McCampbell, project director, Circle Solutions, Inc., 2070 Chainbridge Rd., Ste. 450, Vienna, VA 222182; tel. (703) 902-1225; <http://www.circlesol.com>

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U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, "Methamphetamine Use Among Adult Arrestees: Findings From the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) Program," November 1996.

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Internet Sites

- *Koch Crime Institute*, <http://www.kci.org>;
- *National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies*, <http://www.nasdea.org>;
- <http://www.lifeormeth.org> (sponsored by the MidWest HIDTA);
- <http://www.antimeth.com> (sponsored by the Arizona State Office of the Governor, Methamphetamine Control Strategy); and
- *The Partnership for a Drug Free America*, <http://www.drugfreeamerica.org>.