



Wyo. takes up Montana anti-meth program

March 5, 2008

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) - An effort is under way in Wyoming to begin a methamphetamine prevention program that has been successful in Montana.

The Wyoming Meth Project will use the same marketing strategies and tools used by Montana, said Trudi McMurry, director of the McMurry Foundation, which took the lead in bringing together donors for the Wyoming project with the Montana businessman who conceived the program.

"We are actually taking the exact same information that Montana uses and using it in Wyoming," McMurry said Tuesday.

It's too soon to say when the program will begin in Wyoming because it still needs to hire an executive director and put together an advisory board, she said.

McMurry did say that a group of private donors is working together to fund the initial year of the project.

Tom Siebel, founder of the Montana Meth Project, told officials in Washington, D.C., Tuesday that eight foundations have chipped in for an annual budget of \$1.5 million for the Wyoming effort.

The Montana program features an ongoing marketing campaign, along with community outreach and public policy initiatives, that "realistically and graphically communicate the risk of methamphetamine to the youth of Montana," according to the project's Web site.

Since the project began in 2005, methamphetamine use among Montana teenagers has dropped by 45 percent, according to the site. In a January 2007 report, the state's attorney general said the Montana Meth Project's education campaign, combined with other prevention and enforcement efforts, has had "dramatically positive results."

The number of meth arrests and the number of addicts seeking treatment are among some indicators showing use of the drug has declined in Wyoming. However, at the state's annual methamphetamine and substance abuse conference in January, law enforcement officials warned the problem is far from solved.