

WYOMING METH PROJECT

New Statewide Survey Reveals Wyoming Teens Are Becoming More Aware of the Dangers of Meth Use

Data Shows Significant Increases in Perception of Risk of Trying Meth Even Just Once or Twice

Casper, Wyoming—July 1, 2009—The Wyoming Meth Project today released the results of the 2009 *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey*, the second statewide survey to examine the attitudes and perceptions that Wyoming teens have toward methamphetamine use. The results show that since the launch of the Wyoming Meth Project's prevention campaign in 2008, Wyoming teens have become more aware of the dangers of Meth use—62% of teens believe there is “great risk” in taking Meth even just once or twice. That represents an increase of nearly ten points since teens were first surveyed prior to the launch of the campaign.

Wyoming teens also report that their attitudes about Meth have been directly impacted by the Wyoming Meth Project's statewide advertising campaign—70% of teens report the ads made them more aware of the risks of Meth and 72% say the ads have made them less likely to try Meth.

"The Wyoming Meth Project has made incredible progress over the past year and has changed the way many teens think about Meth," said United States Representative Cynthia Lummis.

"The message is getting through, thanks to the Meth Project, more teens understand that Meth is a dangerous drug with terrible consequences. The good news is every young person we reach with that message means one less person in a Wyoming courtroom or drug treatment program."

The data also show that Wyoming teens are more aware of specific negative physical, behavioral, and emotional consequences associated with Meth use than they were a year ago. Significant increases in perceived risks of changes in behavior or appearance were reported in 13 of the 14 risk areas measured. More than 80% of teens agree that trying Meth just once increases the risk of negative outcomes such as tooth decay, brain damage, insomnia, paranoia, and death. Respondents also indicate that methamphetamine use could change their behavior, make them more likely to steal, have sex with someone they didn't want to, or become violent—perceptions of risk in each of these areas were up by more than ten points compared to 2008.

“The results of the *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* are very encouraging and indicate we are on the right track,” said Natrona County District Attorney Michael Blonigen. “The change in attitudes has already had an impact in the courtroom with people of all ages. We have seen a decrease in both the number of possession of Meth cases as well as distribution of Meth cases. We have also seen a decline in other Meth related crime. Based on our initial progress, I am confident that a continued focus on public education will lead to a significant decline in Meth use in Wyoming.”

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The *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was conducted from March to May 2009 by GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media. Researchers surveyed 913 teens aged 12-17 from throughout Wyoming. The survey is the second statewide study to measure the attitude of Wyoming teens toward methamphetamine. The first survey, conducted in 2008, established a benchmark against which to measure changes in attitudes. Both surveys were funded by the Wyoming Meth Project, which was launched in 2008 to reduce Meth use in the state.

According to research conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Wyoming ranks number one in the U.S. for Meth use by those 12 and olderⁱ, and number two in the U.S. for Meth use by teens aged 12 to 17ⁱⁱ. In 2007, 94% of Wyoming District Court drug offenders were convicted of Meth related crimes, up from 68% in 2005ⁱⁱⁱ. Wyoming law enforcement and social service officials indicate Meth is the number one drug problem facing the state, citing the drug's devastating social and financial impacts.

Wyoming is one of seven states to implement the Meth Project's large-scale prevention campaign. First launched in Montana in 2005, the Meth Project has demonstrated significant results in changing attitudes and behaviors towards methamphetamine. When the program launched in Montana the state ranked #5 in the nation for Meth abuse; as of 2008, the state ranked #39. Meth use among teens in Montana has declined by 45%, Meth-related crime has dropped 62%, and workers testing positive for Meth have declined by 72%. In addition to Wyoming and Montana, there are large-scale Meth Project campaigns in Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, and Illinois.

About the Wyoming Meth Project

The Wyoming 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 2008, the Wyoming Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Wyoming Meth Project is affiliated with 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 www.wyomingmethproject.org.

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ⁱ The NSDUH Report, Issue 37, SAMHSA, OAS, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006

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ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Attorney's Office. District of Wyoming FY07 Annual Report. 2007

Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2009 *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* reveal that Wyoming teens and young adults are more aware of the dangers of taking Meth. While significant progress has been made, the survey findings also stress the need for continued Meth prevention and public awareness efforts. All statistics are sourced from the 2009 *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, available at www.wyomingmethproject.org. The following highlights some of the survey's principle findings:

Perceived Benefits and Risks of Meth Use

- Compared to the 2008 benchmark survey, Wyoming teens have come to view Meth use as more dangerous.
 - 62% of teens now believe there is “great risk” in taking Meth just once or twice (up 9 points)
- Wyoming teens are now more aware of the specific dangers of Meth use. Significant increases (as much as 13 points) in perceptions of risk in trying Meth just once were reported in 13 of the 14 risk areas measured.
- Now, at least eight in ten teens believe there is a “great” or “moderate risk” of the following after trying the drug once:
 - Having sex with someone they don't want to (up 13 points)
 - Tooth decay (up 13 points)
 - Stealing (up 13 points)
 - Becoming paranoid (up 12 points)
 - Suffering brain damage (up 12 points)
 - Getting insomnia or not being able to sleep (up 12 points)
 - Not taking care of hygiene (up 12 points)
 - Dying (up 11 points)
 - Becoming violent (up 11 points)
 - Making their problems worse (up 9 points)

Key Information Sources and Advertising Effectiveness

- Wyoming teens and young adults report significant increases in exposure to anti-meth advertising in 2009. Exposure to anti-meth TV commercials up 12 points among teens and radio up 14 points among young adults.

- Majorities of teens (72%) and 79% of young adults “agree” the Wyoming Meth Project ads made them less likely to try or use meth. 70% of teens and 87% of young adults stated the ads made them more aware of the risks of using meth.
- The ads communicated to Wyoming teens that meth will make you look different than you usually do (83% of teens and 79% of young adults “agree”) and act in a way you would not want to act (83% of teens and 84% of young adults “agree”).

Social Approval and Parental Discussions

- 86% of young adults say friends would give them a “hard time” if they, themselves should ever use it (up 7 points since 2008).
- Significant increases in the number of parents who say they would take specific actions if they found out their teen is taking meth, “speak to my teen” (93% up 12 points since benchmark). Other specific actions such as “speak to my teen’s principal” rose 16 points, “speak to my spouse” and “speak to a close friend” both went up by 17 points.