

WYOMING METH PROJECT

Wyoming Meth Project Releases Results of New Statewide Meth Use & Attitudes Survey

New Survey Shows 45% of Wyoming Youth Report Meth Is Readily Available and 1 in 4 Teens See Little to No Risk in Trying the Drug

CASPER, Wyoming—July 21, 2008—The Wyoming Meth Project today released results from three statewide surveys measuring attitudes and behaviors that Wyoming teens, young adults and parents have toward methamphetamine. Results of the first *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* show that young people in Wyoming believe Meth is a low-risk, easily accessible drug that offers benefits—beliefs that put Wyoming youth at significant risk.

Despite the highly addictive nature of methamphetamine, nearly one quarter of Wyoming teens (23%) see little to no risk in trying the drug. Thirty percent of teens and nearly 50% of young adults believe there are significant benefits to methamphetamine use, citing the drug will help them alleviate boredom, lose weight, make them happier, and provide increased energy.

Not only is Meth seen as a low-risk drug, the data also shows it is readily available to young people throughout the state. More than half of young adults (54%) and 35% of teens say it would be easy for them to acquire Meth and 1 in 3 young adults and 16% of teens report that someone has offered them the drug or tried to get them to use it.

“These new survey results show us just how vulnerable our youth are to Meth use and addiction; they are at tremendous risk,” said Jean Davies, Executive Director of the Wyoming Meth Project. “Wyoming ranks 8th in the nation for teen Meth use and we cannot afford to cede any more ground to this drug. Clearly, we need to address the misperceptions that Meth carries little risk and provides benefits to users and communicate the very real dangers of Meth abuse before this very serious statewide problem becomes an unmanageable crisis.”

Prevention expert Brenda Eichoff-Johnson believes that teens and parents each have roles to play in stemming the tide of Meth use in Wyoming. Survey data suggests that Meth use is socially acceptable to many young people in Wyoming, as 32% of teens report their friends would not give them a hard time for using the drug. Furthermore, nearly 40% of young people say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from taking Meth.

“Meth is clearly a serious problem in Wyoming, and addressing attitudes and correcting misperceptions about the drug are two important keys to prevention,” said Eichoff-Johnson, Executive Director of Mercer House. “Young people get information about drugs from many different sources, but research shows that parents are still the most credible source of drug information for teens. The *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* shows that despite the wide availability and perceived benefits of the drug, nearly half of the young people in Wyoming have never discussed Meth with their parents.”

The Wyoming Meth Project, launched in June 2008, is working to educate the state's young people of risks of methamphetamine. The Wyoming Meth Project is based on the national Meth Project model, first introduced in Montana in 2005. The Meth Project is a large-scale prevention program aimed at reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. Central to the program is a research-based marketing campaign that graphically communicates the risks of Meth use. The powerful ad campaign and community engagement activities have been shown to dramatically raise public dialogue about Meth use to find solutions.

The *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed from April 18 to May 30, 2008 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, prior to the launch of the Wyoming Meth Project's statewide Meth prevention campaign in June 2008. The survey was conducted among randomly selected and representative samples of 909 teens, 300 young adults and 323 parents of 12 – 19 year olds. To view the full survey report, please visit www.wyomingmethproject.org.

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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Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2008 *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* revealed that Wyoming teens and young adults find Meth readily available and many see significant benefit but few risks in using the drug. The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings:

All statistics are sourced from the 2008 *Wyoming Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, which is available at www.wyomingmethproject.org.

Availability

- More than four in 10 12- to 24 -year-olds (45%) say it would be at least “somewhat easy” for them to acquire methamphetamine (35% of teens and 54% of young adults).
- One in three young adults (33%) and 16% of teens say someone has offered them meth or tried to get them to use it.
- Two in three parents (65%) believe it would be at least somewhat easy for their child to acquire the drug.

Perceived Benefits and Risks of Meth Use

- Many Wyoming teens and young adults believe benefits to taking Meth include:
 - 30% of teens and 47% of young adults believe that Meth “helps you lose weight”
 - 20% of teens and 23% of young adults believe that using Meth “makes you feel euphoric or very happy”
 - 21% of teens and 36% of young adults believe that Meth “gives you energy”
 - 18% of teens and 15% of young adults believe that using Meth “helps you deal with boredom”
- About one in four teens (23%) see little or no risk in trying Meth.

Social Approval and Parental Discussions

- One third of teens and 21% young adults say their friends would not give them “a hard time” for using Meth.
- 40% of teens and 32% of young adults say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from taking the drug.
- Roughly half of teens (48%) and young adults (47%) say they have never discussed the subject of meth with their parents.