

## **Wyoming Tribune Eagle In Our Opinion: Meth Results Shocking**

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A survey among teens and adults about the use and availability of meth in Wyoming shows again the stranglehold that this life-destroying drug has on this state.

The survey from the Wyoming Meth Project revealed that nearly one quarter of Wyoming residents surveyed see little or no risk in trying meth. That's scary, especially given that even one use of this drug can bring on addiction.

But that's not as scary as the 65 percent of those parents polled who said their children would have no problems getting hold of meth.

It looks like the Wyoming Meth Project and the Cheyenne/Laramie County Meth Initiative have lots of work to do to educate this state about the dangers of this dreadful drug.

True, the number of clandestine labs has been dramatically reduced in the last eight years. But that really is meaningless; most of the meth that finds its way to Wyoming now comes from Mexico.

Wyoming has no reason to be proud of these rankings:

- Second in the nation for meth use by teens ages 12 to 17.
- First in the nation for meth use by young adults ages 18 to 25.
- First in the nation for meth use for those 12 and under.

In 2007, 94 percent of district court drug offenders in Wyoming were convicted of meth-related crimes, up from 68 percent in 2005.

If Wyomingites really understood the long-range health hazards associated with the use of meth, or could talk to someone first-hand about the real impacts of this drug, they just might change their minds about the risks of even one use.

Health hazards associated with meth include increased heart rate and blood pressure, damage to one's blood vessels in the brain that could result in strokes and/or respiratory problems, irregular heartbeat and extreme anorexia. Worst of all, it can lead to death.

Addiction to this drug takes heavy tolls on families, too. When money is used to buy meth, bills aren't paid and the users lose their jobs. Children are the most innocent victims as their parents become lost chasing the latest high.

But all is not lost.

When Montana started its public campaign against meth, it ranked fifth in the nation for meth abuse. Two years later, it is 39th. The results are impressive: Meth use among adult men declined by 72 percent; teen use dipped by 45 percent; and meth-related crimes fell a whopping 62 percent.

The Wyoming Meth Project is currently conducting a statewide campaign to warn residents about the dangers of meth. Our hope is that Wyoming can have similar results when its campaign comes to a close.

Wyoming is known nationally for its scenic beauty and abundant wildlife. What we don't want it to be known for are its high rates of meth use.

Something needs to change in Wyoming, and it starts in each community.