

COLORADO METH PROJECT®

Colorado Meth Project Launches Statewide Meth Prevention Campaign

*State and Private Leaders Unveil Proven Meth Project Program
to Reduce First-Time Meth Use*

Denver—May 7, 2009—The Colorado Meth Project today launched an integrated statewide methamphetamine prevention campaign, designed to significantly reduce Meth use—one of the state’s leading public health and law enforcement issues. Governor Bill Ritter, Attorney General John Suthers, and Kent MacLennan, Executive Director of the Colorado Meth Project, unveiled the program, supported by law enforcement officials, community leaders, and students.

Colorado currently ranks #8 in the country for Meth useⁱ and it is estimated the drug costs the state \$1.4 billion annually, including more than \$73,000 per dependent user.ⁱⁱ It is among the top six states for identity theft,ⁱⁱⁱ largely due to Meth use, and 70% of Colorado counties report increased foster care placements due to Meth.^{iv} Nationally, the annual cost of Meth use is estimated at more than \$23 billion.^v

“Meth places a disproportionate burden on our criminal justice, healthcare, and social service systems. It is destroying communities and costing taxpayers billions,” said Ritter. “Today, we are fighting back by implementing the Colorado Meth Project to prevent a new generation of users from ever trying Meth.”

The Colorado Meth Project is a large-scale, statewide program engaged in a range of prevention efforts aimed at reducing first-time Meth use. Central to the program is an ongoing, research-based public messaging campaign consisting of television, radio, print, billboard, and Internet advertising to educate young people about the risks of Meth use. The saturation-level media campaign, which begins airing today, will reach 70-90% of teens, 3-5 times per week.

First launched in Montana in 2005, the Meth Project has demonstrated significant results in changing attitudes and behaviors towards Meth. When the program launched, Montana ranked #5 among states for Meth abuse; as of 2008, the state ranked #39.^{vi} Adult Meth use in the state has decreased 72%, Meth use among teens is down 45%, and Meth-related crimes have declined 62%.^{vii} The program has since expanded to Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, and Wyoming, with additional states to follow later this year.

“The implications of Meth use in Colorado are enormous,” said Suthers. “Meth is a major contributing cause for crime in our state. It accounts for nearly one-third of drug-related offenses and is responsible for increasing jail and prison populations. I am proud to have worked with current Secretary of the Interior and former Colorado Senator and Attorney General Ken Salazar, and foundation and community leaders on this remarkable partnership of private and public organizations to bring the Meth Project to the state of Colorado.”

Results of the first *Colorado Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* were also announced today. The report examines the attitudes that Colorado teens and young adults have towards

methamphetamine, providing additional context for the Meth problem in Colorado. The survey, conducted among teens and young adults across the state, found that 36% of young adults report Meth is readily available and 32% report having been offered the drug.^{viii}

The Colorado Meth Project is designed to arm teens with the facts about methamphetamine so they make better informed decisions when faced with the opportunity to try the drug. The campaign's core message, "Not Even Once," speaks to the highly addictive nature of Meth.

"The data shows our young people are at risk. They report Meth is easy to get and many are being offered the drug by their friends," said Linda Childears, president and CEO of the Daniels Fund, a funder of the Colorado Meth Project. "This campaign is intended to educate our teens about the stark reality of Meth, raise awareness statewide, and provide the opportunity for parents to talk with their teens about Meth, since we know education and parent-child communications are key to preventing use."

The Colorado Meth Project's ongoing, research-based messaging campaign is complemented by community outreach programs. Regional events in Pueblo and Grand Junction early next week will highlight the Colorado Meth Project's grassroots partnerships as its outreach efforts expand around the state. In conjunction with today's launch, the Colorado Meth Project website is now available with facts about methamphetamine addiction in the state, as well as information for teens and parents. Additionally, the site archives the full results and findings of the *Colorado Meth Use & Attitudes Survey*. To learn more, and to view the Colorado Meth Project ads, visit the website at www.coloradomethproject.org.

About the Colorado Meth Project

The Colorado Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. The Colorado Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign and community action. The Colorado 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.coloradomethproject.org.

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ⁱ SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies. *National Surveys on Drug Use and Health 2003-2006*. 2007.

ⁱⁱ RAND Corporation, *The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States, 2005*. February 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ Federal Trade Commission, Identity Theft Victim Complain Data, Identity Theft Clearinghouse, 2007

^{iv} National Association of Counties, Two Surveys of U.S. Counties: The Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities, The Impact of Meth on Children, 2005

^v RAND Corporation, *The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States, 2005*. February 2009.

^{vi} Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. *Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-up Report on Trends and Progress*. April 2008.

^{vii} Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. *Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-up Report on Trends and Progress*. April 2008.

^{viii} Gfk Roper, Colorado Meth Use & Attitudes Survey May 7, 2009