

Alcohol, Tobacco and
Other Drug Control Policy Task Force's
**COMPREHENSIVE
BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE**

A

~ **LIVING DOCUMENT** ~

Prepared for

Governor Judy Martz

and

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September 2002

EXCERPTS

4.2.6 Methamphetamine Addicts

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive drug that can be manufactured by using products commercially available anywhere in the United States ⁹⁰. The use of the drug is growing in Montana and the successful treatment of meth addicts is challenging but can be done. As one parent of a former meth addict stated, ... "In this journey, we learned two important lessons. The first is that this problem can happen to anyone. The second is that treatment, when done well, works ⁹¹."

For 2001, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services' special report on alcohol and drugs reported that out of 8,365 admissions in state-approved programs for alcohol and drugs, 1,530 of those admissions, or 18 percent, were for methamphetamine ⁹². A further break-down of the admissions include:

- 2920 were female admission, of which 620 were meth
- 512 were Native American females, of which 126 were meth
- 5,455 were male admissions, of which 910 were meth
- 844 were Native American male admissions, of which 137 were meth

The Center for Substance Abuse and Treatment has funded a Methamphetamine Treatment Project. There were seven sites, one in Hawaii, five in California, and the one in Billings, Montana. The project assessed the characteristics of the clients when they started treatment. The project found that Billings's meth users had the highest rate of intravenous drug use of all seven sites with a rate of 56 percent. The next highest rate of any of the sites was 30 percent ⁹³! Intravenous drug use is significant due to the medical complications of Hepatitis B and C, HIV infections and other risk factors.

5.1.1 The Impacts of Meth

Across the nation, while burdens to the correction systems are increasing, primarily due

EQC - Agency Oversight Subcommittee
October 8, 2003

EXHIBIT #5

to non-violent offenders, state coffers are suffering ¹³³ . Montana is no exception to the reduction in available “public funds” and county revenues are also down. In spite of reduced budgets methamphetamine is putting increased demands on public funds and resources. Between October 2001 and April 2002, 63 methamphetamine labs were discovered by local law enforcement officials throughout the state of Montana ¹³⁴ . Cleaning up these lab sites cost the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency \$670,000. The increase in the number of meth labs has been phenomenal. As an example, in Great Falls the Police Department dealt with two meth labs in 1999 and two in 2000. In 2001 they investigated and/or cleaned 38 sites.

Meth labs are a large drain on local and state resources and are a major environmental problem. Clandestine labs are found in rural, city and suburban residences; barns, garages and other outbuildings; back rooms of businesses; apartments; hotel and motel rooms; storage facilities; vacant buildings; and vehicles. Small portable labs are commonly referred to as "Mom and Pop" or "Beavis and Butthead" labs.¹³⁵

Each pound of methamphetamine produced leaves behind five or six pounds of toxic waste. Methamphetamine cooks often pour leftover chemicals and byproduct sludge down drains in nearby plumbing, storm drains, or directly onto the ground. Chlorinated solvents and other toxic byproducts used to make methamphetamine pose long-term hazards because they can persist in soil and groundwater for years. Clean-up costs are exorbitant because solvent contaminated soil usually must be incinerated.

Cleanups of labs are extremely resource-intensive and beyond the financial capabilities of most jurisdictions. The average cost of a cleanup is about \$5,000 but some cost up to \$100,000 or more.¹³⁶ Some law enforcement officers have said that nothing has impacted local law enforcement in Montana more than meth.

In July, 2002 representatives from the Montana Departments of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Justice (DOJ), Labor & Industry (DLI), Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS), the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and Region VIII EPA Helena Office met to discuss issues surrounding clandestine drug labs in Montana to identify options to help protect human health and the environment. They decided by consensus to work together to develop meth lab clean-up guidance that can be used without government oversight. The guidance will consist of a pamphlet containing general information gathered from other states with incorporation of information relative to Montanans. It will also include the creation of a website with pertinent information to help landowners identify solutions for cleaning up both indoor and outdoor environmental impacts. The group also determined that if the Montana Legislature determines that environmental impacts associated with clandestine drug labs needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner, it will be incumbent upon them to provide the financial and human resources to do so.

The environmental contamination at meth lab sites also impacts realtors and insurance companies who are very concerned about the toxicity of Meth labs and the cost of

cleaning up the sites. There currently is no system to “certify” a former meth lab as “cleaned-up” enough to restore its property value.

Although revenues from properties seized each year from drug related offenses in Montana go directly into the state special revenue funds and are credited to the Department of Justice to help offset enforcement costs, the total amount is only approximately \$125,000. A relatively small amount compared to overall drug impacts to the correctional system.

Through the leadership of Senator Max Baucus in March 2002 six Montana counties were included in the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) a long awaited federal designation that helps state law enforcement officials fight the growing methamphetamine problem in the state with federal funds. These counties were recognized for having among the highest number of meth lab seizures in the nation in 2001.

In 2002 \$500,000 will be available to be shared by those six counties, allowing some state funds to be shifted to rural communities across the state. Starting in 2003 Montana will receive \$1 million annually in HIDTA funds, again to be used by the six counties. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry recently (mid 2002) established a satellite office in Montana to assist with the problems associated with clandestine drug labs. They are considering offering training courses to federal, state, county, local and tribal agencies who may encounter chemicals associated with drug labs, as well as providing assistance to victims. While their primary concern at this time is with agency activities at Libby, it is hoped that further assistance may be garnered from this office by the rest of the State.

FUTURE HOPES

6.13 COMPREHENSIVE METHAMPHETAMINE PLAN

Desired Outcome:

Montana has a comprehensive plan to deter manufacturing and sale of methamphetamine; cleanup of sites and contamination; and increase education.

The comprehensive plan should include: increased enforcement designed to deter the manufacture, sale and use of methamphetamine (meth); increased training and education for citizens and professionals impacted by meth; cleanup of meth-related sites and contamination; and improved prevention, enforcement and treatment that is coordinated in an effort to mitigate the impacts of meth in Montana.

A. Recommendation: The Montana Departments of Justice, Environmental Quality and Health and Human Services should cooperate to develop and promote standards, protocols and procedures that are appropriate to the cleanup of the immediate areas or surrounding environments, both public and private, where chemicals, equipment and wastes from clandestine laboratory operations have been placed or come to rest.
Explanation: The Health and Human Services Department has been directed by the

Governor to set cleanup standards. This department should get federal clarification of who has the responsibility and authority to certify that a site is “clean” and what the standards and risks are. The federal government is currently encouraging letters be sent to owners of properties where meth labs have been found informing them that there could a problem; but the problem and risks are not well defined, nor is the remedy clear. There are liability issues to consider in determining who is ultimately responsible in declaring a property “clean”.

Cleanup protocol should include clear guidelines on the responsibilities of governmental jurisdictions (tribal, state and federal) and on individual responsibilities. It should include communication/notification requirements and specifics on what type of cleanup is required in different instances.

B. Recommendation: The Montana Department of Justice should assemble and establish a bank of public information resources relative to the prevention, treatment and enforcement of methamphetamine offenses, including guidelines for the public and private cleanup of sites and contamination, treatment options and their effectiveness and how to identify if someone you know is abusing drugs or alcohol.

Explanation: There needs to be a state agency that the public, education personnel and other professionals can go to for information relative to the clean-up of sites, contamination issues, treatment options and their effectiveness and how to identify if someone you know is abusing drugs or alcohol....

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TREATMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT