



THE INFORMANT



Meth Watch Member e-Letter

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Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council's (GSSAC) Prevention Center
Spokane County Meth Action Team (MAT)



METHAMPHETAMINE IS ONE OF THE MOST ADDICTIVE DRUGS KNOWN



It's cheap and provides a high that lasts for hours, even days. It makes users feel super human. However, the devastating effects of this substance leave a trail of broken families and destroyed lives. Meth not only produces a euphoric high that ropes users in the first time they use it, but also an addiction that is more often than not, a death sentence.

The grip that Meth has over its users is so powerful and intense that the user loses the cognitive ability to rationalize what's important (children, food, shelter). Nothing else matters, leaving them severely brainwashed by the substance.

Meth causes an intense rush when ingested, smoked, snorted or injected. This rush comes from the brain's release of high levels of dopamine—the substance in the brain that makes you feel pleasure.

SCALE OF DOPAMINE RELEASED:

- **Cheeseburger** 1.5
- **Sex** 2.0
- **Nicotine** 2.0
- **Cocaine** 4.0
- **Meth** 11.0

As you can see from the scale above, the amount of dopamine that is released into the brain by Meth is by far, the highest amount produced by most substances. No natural activity produces such a high level of dopamine in the brain. This is why it is so addicting, as well as extremely hard on the body and brain. And also why addicts many times choose the drug over their own children.

When addicts use Meth over and over again, the drug actually changes their brain chemistry, destroying the wiring in the brain's pleasure centers and making it increasingly impossible to experience any pleasure at all.

Despite the life changing addiction and physical changes of a Meth users' body, addicts can recover and learn to lead productive and successful lives. Treatment does work. (Source: *Meth Watch Community Presentation*)

WASHINGTON STATE HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF NONMEDICAL USE OF PRESCRIPTION PAIN RELIEVERS IN THE NATION

Abuse and nonmedical use of prescription drugs is a big problem that appears to be growing. This epidemic isn't only inflicting youth, but thousands of adults as well.

These days it is not hard to find drugs and alcohol and it's becoming more and more accessible to find prescription drugs. Drug availability is a key piece in preventing substance abuse; the more available a substance is, the more likely it will be abused. Fifty-six percent of people using prescription pain relievers for nonmedical use got them from a friend or family member for free. When youth were asked "Which is easiest for someone your age to buy: cigarettes, beer, marijuana, or prescription drugs such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin or Ritalin without a prescription?" Nineteen percent responded that it was easier to find prescription drugs, compared to thirteen percent one year ago.

Another reason these drugs are becoming more readily available is because doctors are prescribing more of them. The number of prescriptions for Opioids escalated from 40 million in 1991 to 180 million in 2007.

The problem with legal and medicinal prescription drugs, is that they are very beneficial to people who need them and use them responsibly; however, they can be extremely dangerous when abused. Twenty-five percent of all emergency department visits are associated with nonmedical use of pharmaceuticals. In 2005, 33,000 Americans died from nonmedical use of prescription drug overdoses, a large majority of these were pain relievers.

In 2005, Washington State, led the nation in the number of pharmacy burglaries and armed robberies with 63 burglaries and 49 armed robberies. This reinforces how addicting these medications are when abused; the addict will do anything to get them.

Perception of harm is low among our youth and parents. Over fifty percent of teens think that abusing these kinds of medications is not risky. Seventy five percent of parents do not talk to their children about the dangers of using prescription drugs to get high. The majority of individuals see prescription drugs as "safer" than using an illicit substance, such as heroin. The truth is, abusing prescription drugs is just as dangerous and addicting, if not more than any illicit drug.

Source: Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED); Join Together

Action Steps in Preventing Prescription Drug Abuse:

- Talk to your children, co-workers, family & friends about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs.
- Keep track of your medications.
- Lock up medications.
- Dispose of unused prescription drugs properly.
- Raise awareness!



Proper Disposal of Unused Prescription Drugs:

- Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash.
- Mixing prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, such as coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as sealable bags, will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.
- *Never* flush medications down the toilet.
- Spokane County has a solid-waste program at the Waste Energy Plant, where unused medications are burned.

Group Health Prescription Drug "Take Back" Program

PHARMACY LOCATIONS:


South Hill Medical Center Pharmacy: 4102 S. Regal St., Suite 101 Spokane, WA 99223 (509) 535-2277

Lidgerwood Medical Center Pharmacy: 6002 N. Lidgerwood St. Spokane, WA 99208 (509) 482-4402

Veradale Medical Center Pharmacy: 14402 E. Sprague Ave. Spokane, WA 99216 (509) 922-2625

Riverfront Medical Center Pharmacy: 322 W. North River Drive Spokane, WA 99201 (509) 324-6464

**Disposal bins are located in the pharmacy lobby at each of these four Spokane medical centers.
The program is not limited to only Group Health members.
Anyone can deposit unneeded prescription medications at these sites.**



Meth destroys families.

Lawmaker Proposes Meth Offender Registry

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A southwest Missouri lawmaker wants to make it easier for people to know whether they live near a methamphetamine maker or dealer.

Legislation filed this week, ahead of the start of the 2009 session, would create an online registry for certain meth-related drug convictions that would be modeled after the state's existing sex offender list. The measure, filed by Rep. David Sater, R-Cassville, is similar to a bill he filed in 2008.

The 2009 session began Jan. 7, but lawmakers could begin filing legislation Monday. Submitting a bill early means it will begin moving through the legislative process on the first day but does not necessarily mean it has a greater chance passing. Through Friday, senators had prefiled more than 100 bills and four proposed constitutional amendments; House members had prefiled 70 bills.

The meth registration requirements would apply to any Missourian found guilty after Aug. 28 of a variety of drug crimes, including trafficking, distributing, delivering or producing meth, selling it within 2,000 feet of a school or 1,000 feet of public housing, and knowingly allowing a minor to buy or transport meth.

Those on the meth offender list would be removed seven years after the conviction or guilty plea.

Several states have considered legislation that would create online registries of meth offenders and Tennessee, Illinois, Minnesota and Montana already keep lists.

Missouri's meth offender list would be posted on the Internet and maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol, which also maintains the list of more than 7,200 registered sex offenders. But unlike the sex offender registry, individual profiles on the meth offender list would not be updated regularly and wouldn't necessarily include a picture of the offender.

Highway Patrol spokesman Capt. Tim Hull said Friday that would make the meth list less labor intensive than running the sex offender registry.

For Sater's 2008 bill, the Highway Patrol estimated that it would cost about \$53,000 to create and \$1,400 per year to maintain. Last year's legislation was never considered by a House committee.

Source: www.methpedia.org