

THE MONTANA METH PROJECT: “UNSELLING” A DANGEROUS DRUG

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Anyone concerned about the high cost and the continued need to fight the war on drugs should care about what has happened in Montana since 2005. While teen use of methamphetamine (meth) remained relatively constant across the nation from 2005 to 2007, it fell by forty-five percent in Montana.³ During the same period, the percentage of workers testing positive for meth in the state declined by seventy-two percent, and meth-related crime dropped by sixty-two percent.⁴

These positive developments reflect the work of the Meth Project, a large-scale marketing campaign designed to discourage meth use among teenagers.⁵ The success of the campaign has attracted the attention of law enforcement and drug policy officials in other states. Indeed, Arizona,⁶ Idaho,⁷ Illinois,⁸ and Wyoming⁹ have adopted the Meth Project model, and a number of other states are expected to follow suit.

This Article describes the meth problem, the Meth Project, the results it produced in Montana, and some key features of its model.

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3. MONT. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, METHAMPHETAMINE IN MONTANA: A FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON TRENDS AND PROGRESS I (2008), *available at* <http://www.doj.mt.gov/news/releases2008/20080331report.pdf>.

4. *Id.*

5. *See* Montana Meth Project, <http://www.montanameth.org>.

6. *See* Arizona Meth Project, <http://www.arizonamethproject.org>.

7. *See* Idaho Meth Project, <http://www.idahomethproject.org>.

8. *See* Illinois Meth Project, <http://www.illinoismethproject.org>.

9. *See* Wyoming Meth Project, <http://www.wyomingmethproject.org>.

THE PROBLEM

“Meth makes crack look like candy.”¹⁰ This sentiment, expressed by a midwestern sheriff, is commonplace among law enforcement officials, treatment professionals, and others on the front lines of the battle against this drug. While crack is still the drug of choice in America’s inner cities, the meth epidemic has affected large portions of rural America and some urban and suburban areas as well. In a 2006 survey by the National Association of Counties, nearly half of the counties surveyed identified meth as their primary drug threat, more than cocaine (twenty-two percent), marijuana (twenty-two percent) and heroin (three percent) combined.¹¹

Meth operates on the pleasure chemistry of the brain. When smoked or injected, meth floods the brain with the pleasure-producing chemical dopamine, causing a rush of pleasure that is significantly greater than the pleasure produced by other illicit drugs and by “normal” human experiences.¹² Research shows that food increases normal dopamine levels by fifty percent, and cocaine increases levels by 300 percent.¹³ The use of methamphetamine can increase dopamine levels more than three times the level of cocaine, to over 1000 percent.¹⁴

The initial rush experienced by a meth user is followed by a euphoric high that lasts eight to twenty-four hours, much longer than the relatively brief high

10. E-mail from Tom Cundiff, Sheriff of Williamson County, Illinois, to Steven A. Mange (April 24, 2009) (on file with authors).

11. NAT’L ASS’N OF COUNTIES, *THE METH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA: THE CRIMINAL EFFECT OF METH ON COMMUNITIES* 3 (2006), available at http://www.naco.org/Content/ContentGroups/Publications1/Surveys1/Special_Surveys/Meth_SurveyReport-Jul2006.pdf.

12. NAT’L INST. ON DRUG ABUSE, RESEARCH REP. NO. 06-4210, at 4 (2006), available at <http://www.nida.nih.gov/PDF/RRMetham.pdf>.

13. Zhi-Bing You, Bin Wang, Dawnya Zitzman & Roy A. Wise, *Acetylcholine Release in the Mesocorticolimbic Dopamine System During Cocaine Seeking: Conditioned and Unconditioned Contributions to Reward and Motivation*, 28 *J. NEUROSCIENCE* 9021, 9024 (2008); Richard A. Rawson, Professor, UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs, *Methamphetamine: Modifications in Brain Functioning and Mental Health Implications*, Presentation in Dallas, Tex. 27-28, (August 2008), available at <http://www.uclaisap.org/slides/presentations-meth-2008-2007.html>; PBS Frontline, *The Meth Epidemic: Meth and The Brain*, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/meth/body/> (Feb. 14, 2006).

14. Anita Slomski, *The Addicted Brain*, *PROTO: DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTIERS OF MED.*, Fall 2006, at 17; Richard A. Rawson, Professor, UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs, *Methamphetamine: New Knowledge about the Epidemic, the Neurobiology and Clinical Issues*, Presentation in Va. 41-42 (July 20, 2006), available at <http://www.uclaisap.org/slides/rawson/Virginia%20July%2020,%202006%20.ppt>; PBS Frontline, *supra* note 13.

induced by crack cocaine.¹⁵ Because meth costs about the same as or less than crack but delivers a stronger rush and longer-lasting high, it attracts a large population of illicit drug users. As one leading expert put it: "From a marketing point of view, meth really gives you a bigger bang for your buck."¹⁶

While meth can be purchased for a low price, it exacts a very high price on the health and well-being of the user. Many users quickly develop an intense craving for the drug. As the addictive process develops, one use leads to another, and repeated use alters the chemistry of the brain, making it difficult, and then impossible for the user to experience pleasure from anything in life but meth.¹⁷ Taking meth can be likened to standing in front of a speaker at rock concert and realizing, afterwards, that your ears are ringing and your hearing is impaired. Go to enough rock concerts and your hearing is not just impaired, it is damaged.

Just as a person with damaged hearing has to turn up the volume to hear anything at all, a person with a meth-damaged brain has to turn up the pleasure to feel anything at all. Normal life experiences no longer produce pleasure, and may cease to matter at all to many meth addicts. Children, family, friends, employment, sports, hobbies, church, and community often fall by the wayside or—worse yet—become obstacles to the only thing the serious meth user wants: more meth.¹⁸ Some meth addicts will do anything to get meth, no matter how degrading or destructive.

The social and economic costs of the meth epidemic are staggering. Meth addicts often neglect or abuse their children.¹⁹ They under-perform at their jobs and cause other problems in the workplace, leading to lost productivity.²⁰

15. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, CDC HIV/AIDS FACT SHEET: METHAMPHETAMINE USE AND RISK FOR HIV/AIDS 3 (2007), <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/meth.htm>.

16. Andrew Jacobs, *Battling H.I.V. Where Sex Meets Crystal Meth*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 21, 2006.

17. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, *supra* note 15, at 2-3; Vicki Brower, *Loosening Addiction's Deadly Grip*, 7 EMBO REP. 140, 140-142 (2006); Slomski, *supra* note 14; Gary Warth, *The Neuroscience of Meth*, N. COUNTY TIMES, Aug. 26, 2007 (quoting Richard Rawson); PBS Frontline, *supra* note 13.

18. Brower, *supra* note 17; CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, *supra* note 15, at 2-3; GENERATIONS UNITED, METH AND CHILD WELFARE: PROMISING SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS 8-9 (2006), http://www.ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/Meth_Child_Welfare_Final_cover.pdf; Slomski, *supra* note 14; Warth, *supra* note 17; PBS Frontline, *supra* note 13.

19. Rebecca A. Clay, *Methamphetamine Jeopardizes Children's Welfare*, SAMHSA NEWS, Aug. 2006, at 4; KAREN SWETLOW, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CHILDREN AT CLANDESTINE METHAMPHETAMINE LABS: HELPING METH'S YOUNGEST VICTIMS 4 (2003).

20. FINAL REPORT: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS (2004); ROBERT WHELAN & SAM BOGGESS, THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY METH TAX (2005).

Those who make their own meth create toxic waste sites in their kitchens, garages, and cars.²¹ Many meth addicts steal to support their habit.²² When meth addicts drive under the influence of meth, they endanger innocent bystanders.²³ When they are “tweaking”—coming down from an extended high—they are often paranoid, erratic and violent. They may lash out at those around them; especially those who stand between themselves and more meth. Meth users attack, injure, and sometimes kill people, from loved ones to law enforcement officers.²⁴

In meth-infested communities, meth addicts place a heavy burden on emergency rooms and other healthcare facilities.²⁵ They often fill up county jails,²⁶ state prisons, and federal penitentiaries and, once there, run up substantial medical and dental bills.²⁷ In Montana in 2005, half the jail population was incarcerated for meth-related offenses.²⁸

Because meth manufacture and use are crimes—and because they often lead to other crimes—meth addicts often occupy a disproportionate amount of time and resources for local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors.²⁹ Addicts are often unable to care for their children, placing a burden on foster care systems.³⁰ Half the children in Montana’s foster care system in 2005 were there because of meth, for example.³¹ Adding to the burden on communities, make-shift meth labs generate toxic waste that meth makers toss in ditches, streams,

21. SWETLOW, *supra* note 19.

22. NAT’L ASSOC. OF COUNTIES, THE METH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA: THE CRIMINAL EFFECT OF METH ON COMMUNITIES 3, 5 (2006); NW. HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA PROGRAM, METHAMPHETAMINE AND RELATED CRIME: THE IMPACTS OF METHAMPHETAMINE ABUSE 12-13 (2006); WHELAN & BOGGESS, *supra* note 20 at 3-4; Mike Sunnucks, *Meth Taking Toll on Businesses, State*, PHOENIX BUS. J., Feb. 17, 2006.

23. NW. HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA PROGRAM, *supra* note 22, at 26-27.

24. *Id.* at 12-13, 25-26; Luke Engan, *Meth & Destruction: Trooper’s Widow Carries Message*, DNHI NEWS SERV., Oct. 5, 2005.

25. NAT’L INST. ON DRUG ABUSE, RESEARCH REPORT: METHAMPHETAMINE ABUSE AND ADDICTION 2-3 (2006); WHELAN & BOGGESS, *supra* note 20, at 5-6; Angela Gonzales, *Meth Crisis Puts Financial Pressure on Local Hospitals*, PHOENIX BUS. J., Feb. 24, 2006.

26. NAT’L ASS’N OF COUNTIES, THE METH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA: THE CRIMINAL EFFECT OF METH ON COMMUNITIES 3, 5 (2006).

27. *Rotting Teeth of Meth Users Cost Ohio Taxpayers*, ASSOC. PRESS, Feb. 20, 2006.

28. METHAMPHETAMINE IN MONTANA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON TRENDS AND IMPACT 7 (2007).

29. NAT’L ASS’N OF COUNTIES, THE METH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA: THE CRIMINAL EFFECT ON METH ON COMMUNITIES, A 2006 SURVEY OF U. S. COUNTIES (2006).

30. GENERATIONS UNITED, *supra* note 18, at 8-9; NAT’L ASSOC. OF COUNTIES, THE METH EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA: TWO SURVEYS OF U.S. COUNTIES 3, 6 (2005); WHELAN & BOGGESS, *supra* note 20, at 4-5; *Meth Sending More Children to Foster Care in Idaho*, ASSOC. PRESS, Mar. 6, 2006.

31. METHAMPHETAMINE IN MONTANA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON TRENDS AND IMPACT (2007).

and woods. Roughly fifteen percent of known meth labs are discovered because they blow up or burn down.³²

Faced with the staggering costs of methamphetamine use in their state, Montana state officials sought to target the supply side of the problem. One of the most significant supply-side reduction activity initiatives in Montana was the 2005 legislation that restricted the sale of and access to ephedrine or pseudoephedrine products.³³ The law went into effect in mid-2006. It greatly reduced the number of small clandestine methamphetamine production labs in Montana, often referred to as "Ma and Pa shops."³⁴ Anecdotal reports by the state's drug task forces, however, indicate the availability of methamphetamine remained high even after the 2006 initiative, due to the ongoing activity of interstate and international drug trafficking groups.³⁵

In short, in Montana and elsewhere, meth has threatened the social fabric of rural communities and severely strained the resources of local and state governments.

THE PROJECT

When the Meth Project was founded in Montana, both the state and federal governments were devoting massive resources to the supply side of the problem, restricting access to meth precursors, toughening laws against meth manufacture and distribution, investigating and prosecuting those who violated the law, and increasing the population of jails and prisons with those convicted of meth-related offenses.³⁶ While these efforts resulted in reducing the number of

32. SWETLOW, *supra* note 19, at 4.

33. MONT. ATT'Y GEN. & MONT. METH PROJECT, METHAMPHETAMINE IN MONTANA: A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON TRENDS AND IMPACT 3 (2007).

34. *Id.*

35. ONDCP DRUG POLICY INFO. CLEARINGHOUSE, STATE OF MONTANA, PROFILE OF DRUG INDICATOR 6 (2008), <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/statelocal/mt/mt.pdf>.

36. State and federal programs had existed that targeted the demand for methamphetamines, but none of the size or scope of the Montana Meth Project. http://www.montanameth.org/About_Us/index.php. Senator Max Baucus produced anti-meth public service ads that aired on TV and radio in 2000 and 2001. Also, in 2002 Montana State University (MSU) produced a "grassroots guide" initially funded by a federal COPS grant. Meth Free Montana Website, <http://www.methfreemt.org>. In late 2004, it grew into a program called Meth Free Montana. It included a web site and community-based educational material, such as a "community toolkit" and ten PowerPoint presentations tailored for students titled Tools for Schools. Most of Us Website, <http://www.mostofus.org>. In 2006 the Montana Attorney General's Office assumed oversight of this program. The Office currently hosts the website and disseminates the educational material. *Id.* In addition, in the summer of 2004, Governor Martz, following the recommendations made at a statewide Methamphetamine Summit, adopted the Meth Watch program. Meth Free Montana Website, <http://www.methfreemt.org>. Meth Watch focused on educating retailers about ingredients

local meth labs, they did not have as large of an impact on the number of meth users.

It was in this context that the Meth Project began something different—a large-scale meth prevention program. Because most meth addicts first tried meth between the ages of twelve and seventeen, the Project focused its prevention efforts on that group. And because meth is so highly addictive, the Project decided that it would seek to persuade teens to never to try meth even one time. That goal is reflected in the campaign’s core message: “Not Even Once.”

The Meth Project approached methamphetamine as a consumer product-marketing problem. Meth was and is purchased and consumed. In many respects it is no different than any other consumer product. It is readily available, affordably priced, and travels through efficient distribution channels. Many would-be users perceive benefits in using meth. Some believe it will help them lose weight and give them the energy boost they need to get through the day. Others believe it will help them relieve boredom or escape the problems and frustrations of their daily lives. Many perceive little risk in using meth. Unfortunately, based on these misguided perception, many make the decision to give meth a try. This is the root of the meth problem.

The goal of the Meth Project was to arm young people, ages twelve through seventeen, with the facts about methamphetamine so that they could make a better-informed product consumption decision. To accomplish this goal, the Project sought to:

- Increase the perceived risk and decrease the perceived benefit of trying meth so that perceptions reflected accurate information about the drug;
- Promote dialogue about the drug between parents and teens, as such dialogue has been shown to decrease illicit drug use; and
- Stigmatize use, making meth use socially unacceptable, just as cigarette smoking has become socially unacceptable in recent decades.

The Project began with extensive market research. The Project retained San Francisco-based advertising firm, Venables Bell & Partners, to organize and conduct focus groups.³⁷ The first in-depth qualitative study began in early 2005 in order to understand teens’ perceptions of drugs, methamphetamines,

used in manufacturing meth and provided signage, management tips, and training material for employees. Meth Watch Website, <http://www.methwatch.com>. It was supported by the Department of Health and Human Services and operated for about two years. *Id.*

37. Focus groups consisted of young people between the ages of twelve and eighteen. The firm used a carefully developed script to make phone calls to households in which they resided. With parental permission, the firm recruited participants from a broad range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, with varying levels of extracurricular involvement. Teens were paid seventy-five dollars in exchange for participation, which took about an hour and fifteen minutes of their time.

and anti-drug advertising. The statewide use and attitudes survey found, among other things, that:

- Sixty-seven percent of young people reported that meth was readily available;
- Forty-four percent saw a benefit in using meth;
- Thirty-three percent had been offered meth; and,
- Twenty-five percent saw little or no risk in using meth.

Extensive interviews and focus groups with teens led to some key insights. For example, the point at which kids decided whether and how to experiment with drugs occurred earlier than many adults might think, around the age of thirteen.³⁸ Many teens liked to take risks and experiment with "party drugs" like alcohol, marijuana, or ecstasy; but they did not like the idea of addiction and would avoid any drug, such as heroin, that they perceived as addictive.³⁹ Many teens believed—incorrectly—that meth was a party drug like alcohol, marijuana, or ecstasy, and that it was not an addictive drug like heroin.⁴⁰

Could an anti-meth media campaign change these views? The teens who were interviewed or participated in focus groups said that an anti-drug campaign would not be effective unless it "cut through the clutter" of images and messages that teens encountered every day. Montana teens in 2005—like most teens today—were over-stimulated and desensitized. Adults were constantly telling them what not to do. An effective anti-meth campaign would need to sound like it was coming from other teens, not from adults; it would have to feel immediate, real, and tangible.

Drawing on this and other research, the Meth Project developed a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign designed to "unsell" meth to teens. The Project developed and used fifteen television ads, thirty-one radio ads, fifteen print/outdoor ads, and nine internet ads that focused on conveying five key messages:

1. Meth is dangerous to try even once.
2. Meth will make you look different than normal.
3. Meth will cause you to act in a way that you do not want to act.
4. Meth affects many people's lives other than the user.
5. Meth problems could happen in your town or school.

These messages were treated as "hard facts" with the intent to convey to the teens that methamphetamine is the most addictive illicit drug in the world and that they should fear using the drug because of its effect on them and those around them.

38. Undated, unpublished PowerPoint presentation prepared for Thomas M. Siebel by Venables Bell & Partners (on file with authors).

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.*

The advertisements used powerful and striking images to make teens aware of the consequences of using meth. One print ad pictures a middle-aged woman, sitting bloody and beaten on her kitchen floor. The observer intuits that the white text next to her is her son's explanation for the beating she has so clearly endured: "My mom knows I would never hurt her. Then she got in the way."⁴¹ Other ads draw on equally disturbing images, including graphic illustrations of the decay of users' bodies, young girls selling their bodies to older men for meth, violent criminal behavior committed by meth-hungry teens, and groups of meth users leaving their friends to die.⁴² The Montana Meth Project's earliest ads highlighted the harmful effects of meth on the individual user, while later campaigns shifted the focus to the devastating impact on a user's family and friends. The Project developed and released its ads in stages, so teens that had become desensitized to a particular ad's message would be struck anew by the images and scenarios in the next phase.

From September 2005 through September 2007, the Project sustained a saturation level, statewide advertising campaign that reached seventy to ninety percent of its target audience three to five times a week.⁴³ As the largest advertiser in the state, the campaign included 45,000 television ads, 35,000 radio ads, 10,000 print impressions, and 1,000 billboards statewide.⁴⁴

To reinforce its message, the Project organized a broad range of community action programs. One of the most successful was Paint the State, a first of its kind public art contest aimed at communicating the risks of meth use through public art. During the summer of 2006, the Montana Meth Project provided a unique outlet for action against the devastating effects of meth use in Montana's communities. In what became the largest public art contest in history, Paint the State challenged teens to voice their own powerful anti-meth messages through public art displays. Paint the State prompted thousands of teens and their families to work together to create monumental works of art with strong anti-meth messages. Entries were submitted from every county in the state.

Paint the State succeeded in becoming a catalyst for discourse and widespread action, and conversations spurred by the program were as diverse as the art pieces themselves. Truckers who had battled meth addiction stopped on the

41. This ad is available at http://www.montanameth.org/ads/run/mother_type.jpg.

42. All of the ads are available at http://www.montanameth.org/View_Ads/index.php.

43. SIEBEL FOUND., ANNUAL REPORT 10 (2007), available at http://www.siebelscholars.com/about/FINAL_SIEBEL_AR07_lrez.pdf.

44. *Breaking the Methamphetamine Supply Chain: Meeting Challenges at the Border: Hearing Before the Sen. Fin. Comm.*, 110th Cong. (2007) (Statement of Thomas M. Siebel, Chairman and Founder, The Meth Project); MONT. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, *supra* note 3; *see also* Michelle Donohue, *Shock and Awe Makes an Impression: Sometimes You Can't Go Too Far with Public Awareness*, NONPROFIT TIMES, Sept. 15, 2008, <http://www.nptimes.com/08Sep/npt-080915-1.html>.

sides of roads to share their stories with teens putting up anti-meth signs. Parents and teens openly discussed the dangers of meth use while painting murals, barns, cars, and store windows together. Across the state, colors representing the determination and strength of Montana's teens overpowered the bleak destruction inflicted by the scourge of meth.

The Meth Project initially required a substantial investment of funds and required continuous reevaluation of the effectiveness of its messages. From 2005 through the end of 2007 the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation invested \$25,850,000 in launching the program, market research, and ad development.⁴⁵ Ongoing focus groups allowed the Meth Project to gauge reactions to advertisements before entering the market and to measure the reach and effectiveness of the ads after they were launched. The program continued to fine-tune its messages and effectiveness through additional focus groups, one-on-one interviews, hang-outs, ride-alongs, and high school tours throughout the duration of the project.

THE RESULTS

The Meth Project was effective. While meth use among teens remained relatively constant across the nation, it fell by forty-five percent in Montana.⁴⁶ The percentage of workers that tested positive for meth through workplace testing dropped by seventy-two percent from 2005 to 2007 in Montana.⁴⁷ Meth-related crime has dropped by sixty-two percent in Montana.⁴⁸

Behind these changes in behavior are notable changes in attitudes about meth. Montana teens are aware of the dangers of taking meth, likely to disapprove of taking the drug, and likely to have had discussions with their parents on the subject.⁴⁹ In fact, teens in Montana today view meth as more dangerous than heroin.⁵⁰ More than eighty percent believe there are substantial risks in taking the drug.⁵¹ The great majority of Montana teens (eighty-four percent) strongly disapprove of meth use, a level matched only by their disapproval of heroin use.⁵²

The Project has had a significant impact on the perceived benefits of using

45. SIEBEL FOUND., *supra* note 43, at 31.

46. MONT. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, *supra* note 3.

47. *Id.*

48. *Id.*

49. MONT. METH PROJECT, MONTANA METH: USE & ATTITUDES SURVEY 2008: STATEWIDE SURVEY MEASURING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS METHAMPHETAMINE IN MONTANA 14 (2008).

50. *Id.* at 13.

51. *Id.* at 15.

52. *Id.* at 16.

meth. Consider the percentage of teens surveyed who disagreed with these statements:

- Using meth “makes you more popular.” The percentage of teens who disagreed increased from sixty-seven percent in 2005 to eighty-four percent in 2008.⁵³
- Using meth “makes you feel attractive.” The percentage of teens who disagreed increased from fifty-six percent in 2005 to seventy-nine percent in 2008.⁵⁴
- Using meth “helps you escape your problems.” The percentage of teens who disagreed increased from fifty-six percent in 2005 to eighty-one percent in 2008.⁵⁵

The evidence suggests that these changes stem in large part from the Meth Project. Nearly all Montana teens (eighty-eight percent) have heard of the Project.⁵⁶ The Montana Meth Project ads are widely recognized, with a majority of teens saying they recognize the TV ads “Mother” (seventy percent), “Boy-friend” (sixty-one percent), and the print ad “Sharing” (seventy-eight percent). More than four in ten teens recognize the radio ads “Kara” (53 percent) and “Andrew” (46 percent).⁵⁷ A substantial majority of Montana teens say the ads show that meth will make you look different than normal and act in a way that you do not want to act.⁵⁸ A substantial majority say the ads show that meth problems could happen in their own school or town, that meth affects many people’s lives other than the user, and that meth is dangerous to try just once.⁵⁹

The success of the Meth Project in changing attitudes and behavior has led the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to cite the Meth Project as a model program.⁶⁰ Illinois, Arizona, Idaho, and Wyoming have adopted the Meth Project’s organization and governance model, public service messaging, media planning model, measurement methodology, and public outreach initiatives and have all launched Meth Projects in their respective states.

The Meth Project has been so widely adopted in part because it is an effective program from a cost-benefit analysis. The Montana Meth Project costs about twenty-five dollars per teen per year. Treatment for methamphetamine addiction can run anywhere from \$15,000 to \$50,000 per year. In addition, re-

53. *Id.* at 12.

54. *Id.*

55. *Id.*

56. *Id.* at 35.

57. *Id.* at 27-31.

58. *Id.* at 33.

59. *Id.*

60. Press Release, Montana Meth Project, White House Cites Montana Meth Project as Model for Nation (October 16, 2006), <http://methproject.org/documents/Montana%20Meth%20Project%20ONDCP%20Release%20FINAL.pdf>.

ductions in meth-related crime, social services, and adult meth use contribute to lower law enforcement cost, reduced foster care expenditures, and improvements in worker productivity.

The Meth Project was initially funded by the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation, a nonprofit, public benefit corporation that was established as a private foundation in 1996. The Siebel Foundation’s mission is to support projects and organizations that work to improve the quality of life, environment, and education of its community members. The Foundation engages in strategic philanthropy and funds projects to support the homeless and underprivileged; educational and research programs; alternative energy solutions; and methamphetamine-abuse prevention.

The Meth Project is still operating in Montana but is no longer funded by the Seibel Foundation. Instead, it is funded through a combination of public funding, both state and federal, and private contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals. The state of Montana continues to run independent projects to target meth use on both the supply and demand sides. In 2007, Montana’s state legislature allocated over ten million dollars to methamphetamine-specific supply and demand reduction strategies.

THE MODEL

The Meth Project shows that a research-based marketing campaign can substantially change the attitudes and ultimately the behavior of its target audience. The Project rests on four pillars—a demand-side approach, a consumer product framework, exhaustive research and measurement, and a conscious effort to create a replicable model.

Demand-side approach. While much of the nation’s war on drugs has focused on reducing the supply of illicit drugs, the exclusive focus of the Meth Project is on reducing demand for one specific drug, methamphetamine.

Consumer product. As noted above, the Meth Project approaches methamphetamine as a consumer product. Every day, people are faced with the decision to try meth. Many perceive benefits in using the drug, but little to no risk. This is the root of the problem. To counter this, the goal of the Meth Project is to arm teens and young adults with the facts about methamphetamine so they can make well-informed decisions when presented with the option to try it—ultimately “unselling” meth as a product.

Research and measurement. The Meth Project conducts extensive quantitative and qualitative research. On the qualitative side, the Project has conducted hundreds of in-depth interviews and focus groups with teenagers. On the quantitative side, the Project is responsible for a national use and attitudes survey and eight state surveys—four in Montana (2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008), two in Arizona (2007 and 2008), one in Idaho (2008), and one in central Illinois

(2008).⁶¹ In addition, the Project closely monitors research conducted by the federal government, state agencies, and others. This research serves as the foundation of the Project's marketing campaigns and allows the Project to measure its success in a systematic and scientific manner.

Replicable model. Since the Meth Project began in Montana in 2005, it has worked to develop a model that can be replicated. This design of the replicable model extends not only to the content of the anti-meth marketing campaign but also to the measurement methodologies employed, the community action plans undertaken, and the governance of the state projects themselves.

Governments looking to adopt the Montana Meth Program in their own states work with the national Meth Project Foundation staff, including the board of directors and advisory board. The national Meth Project Foundation staff also commits staff members to new states as they work to adopt the Meth Project.

This model offers a promising alternative—or complement—to existing strategies for addressing illicit drug abuse in the United States.

61. The surveys are available on the websites of the various Meth Projects. The Illinois survey is limited to a single region in the central part of the state, corresponding to the Springfield-Decatur-Champaign media market.