

# **Tools for Schools**

## **The MSU Meth Prevention Education Initiative**

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### **Program of Distinction Category**

- Healthy Lifestyles: Nutrition Education, Health & Fitness, Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions
- Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills: Caring Relationships, Community Spirit

### **Sources of funding that support this program**

Funds to support this initiative come from (1) the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI); (2) the Montana Department of Justice; (3) Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service and (4) the MSU Social Norms Project.

## **Program Content**

### **Knowledge and Research Base**

Methamphetamine (or simply meth) has become the most dangerous drug problem of small-town America. Traffickers make and distribute the drug in some of our country's most rural areas. Twelve to 14-year olds who live in smaller towns are 104% more likely to use meth than those who live in larger cities (Bachtel, 1984; Drug Enforcement Administration, 2003). Given that Montana is a large, rural state, meth use is of particular concern. In the current climate, Extension has an important role to play in drug abuse prevention, especially in the meth problem that is sweeping across the nation (Astroth, 1991; Bachtel, 1984).

In Montana, the meth problem is especially acute. According to data from the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Study, in 2005, 8.3% of Montana high school students admitted to using methamphetamine (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2005). This compares to 7.6% nationally. In addition, one judge has estimated that meth-related trials consume two-thirds of his time on the bench. For example, in 2004, 48.3% of federal sentences in Montana were drug-related. Nearly 75% of these were meth related, compared to 15.5% nationally (U.S. Sentencing Commission, Office of Policy Analysis, 2004). Finally, over 60% of the women in the state women's prison are there on meth-related charges (Montana Department of Corrections, 2004).

Meth is unlike any other illegal drug. Meth is highly addictive, and meth addiction is difficult to treat. Moreover, meth is relatively easy to manufacture, it is cheap, and it produces a seductive and alluring high. While meth is not a new problem, it has recently surfaced again as a major problem in rural states in the West and Midwest. What began as a problem drug in Hawaii, the meth problem has continued to spread from west to east.

One of the reasons meth is such a threat in rural America is because it is cheap and easy to make. Drugs that can be bought over the counter at local stores are mixed with other common ingredients to make meth. Small labs to cook the drug can be set up on tables in kitchens, countertops, garages or just about anywhere. Although super-labs, operated by sophisticated traffickers still supply the majority of meth, these smaller tabletop labs have increased exponentially in the last decade, setting an alarming trend. Curiously, meth has been around for a number of years and a 1970 4-H publication about drugs and youth cited meth as a drug problem over 35 years ago. While not a new issue (Astroth, 1989), the current crisis is real, and purer forms of meth are creating new concerns about the impacts of addiction to meth.

Meth is a powerfully addictive and violent drug. Addiction to methamphetamine carries with it a high risk of developing a range of severe, long-term effects. Meth use can cause depression, anxiety, mood changes, paranoia, and other psychological disorders that create dire consequences for users. Moreover, meth use can cause extreme physical and cognitive deterioration. There are *no* short-term or long-term benefits to using meth. There are only damages. Recent studies have demonstrated that meth causes more damage to the brain than alcohol, heroin, or cocaine.

Methamphetamine use is a serious problem in the U.S. It is a national issue that affects everyone, regardless of personal use or direct involvement (National Association of Counties, 2005). Especially during adolescence, youth are making decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Peer pressure and the desire to fit in—among a multitude of other risk factors—can lead to high-risk behaviors, including drug use. Because the outcomes for long-term meth users are so detrimental, we must start early to educate everyone about the dangers of meth use. Average age of first use of meth is 16-19 years (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2004).

Very young children are also victims of the meth crisis. Thousands of children are neglected every year after living with parents who are meth “cooks” or meth users. National statistics show that 32% of the children taken out of homes where meth is manufactured or distributed test positive for the drug (Montana Department of Justice, 2005). In 2003, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reported that 3,300 children were found in 8,000 meth labs seized (CADA, 2003).

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (2001) has identified scientifically defensible principles that should be incorporated in any successful prevention strategies. The following are especially relevant for this meth program.

### Individual Domain

- Cite immediate consequences.
- Recognize that relationships exist between substance use and a variety of other adolescent health problems.

### Peer Domain

- Communicate peer norms against use of alcohol and other illicit drugs.
- Incorporate social and persona skills-building opportunities.

### School Domain

- Avoid relying solely on knowledge-oriented interventions designed to supply information about negative consequences.
- Give students opportunities to practice newly acquired skills through interactive approaches.
- Correct misconceptions about the prevalence of use in conjunction with other education approaches.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2007), there are five “principles of effectiveness” that should be evident in prevention programs delivered through schools—

- Based on the objective assessment of data for prevalence of drug use among elementary and high school students;
- Based on a clear set of performance measures that ensures that the school and community are drug-free, safe and orderly environments;
- Based on scientifically based research that the program to be used will reduce drug use;
- Based on accurate information about risk, protective and other factors in the environment; and
- Include ongoing consultation and involvement of parents in the development and implementation of the program.

This OPI-funded project met nearly all of these criteria, except we did not know if PowerPoint programs specifically would be effective at reducing drug use. Part of the rationale for this program was to find out if this approach could be effective with middle and high school youth. Power Points are not appropriate for elementary-aged students. However, the strategies used in the Power Points to address both risk and protective factors by using educational methods with a general student population have been supported in the literature (see Goals and Objectives Section below).

### **Needs Assessment**

In 2001, Montanans were shocked to learn about a brutal drug murder of a teen in the far eastern part of our state—in rural Glendive, Montana. As the details became available, we learned that a 16-year old boy was murdered, his body burned, and mutilated—all over a methamphetamine deal gone bad. In response, the community invited the Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath, and youth development specialist, Kirk Astroth, to appear at a community forum to help the community explore solutions and next steps to this new and emerging problem.

As a result of this meeting and subsequent follow-up meetings, discussions began with various divisions of state government about developing prevention materials targeted to youth that might address this problem. At about the same time, MSU Extension agents in the Northeast part of the state met to strategize the best use of Extension resources to meet local needs. The discussion turned to an ominous, destructive force that was sweeping through their communities, leaving a trail of broken families, disrupted lives, and environmental hazards. The meeting ended in an urgent call to action against a common enemy: **methamphetamine**.

The Montana Extension Service held community meetings around the state in November 2003 and meth surfaced as one of the most consistent concerns expressed by agents. As a result of this local level input, MSU Extension faculty began to craft a comprehensive response to dealing with the impacts of meth use at the community level.

In June 2004, the Montana OPI released a Request for Proposal (RFP) requesting proposals to develop educational PowerPoint programs that school teachers could use to educate students about the dangers of meth use. A team of faculty members at MSU came together to develop a proposal in response to this RFP. The team consisted of a youth development specialist, a 4-H youth member, a family life specialist, a nutrition specialist, a medical doctor, the director of the Social Norms Project and a housing and environmental health specialist.

Because meth use is highly correlated to rural states in the West, and because meth use among Montana youth is higher than national averages (see Knowledge and Research Base Section above), this effort was developed to be delivered in all schools across the state. A universal educational strategy was adopted because so little is known about the vectors that lead to meth use among teens.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goals**

- To increase youth knowledge about the dangers of meth use
- To change youths' attitudes towards meth
- To reduce the incidence of teenage meth use in Montana
- To increase youths' pursuit of healthy activities and alternatives to drug use

### **Objectives**

- To increase youths' knowledge about the harmful ingredients used in the production of meth
- To increase youths' knowledge of and ability to identify healthy alternatives to meth use
- To increase youths' skills in becoming media literate
- To improve youths' knowledge of specific resistance skills to counter pressure to use drugs

- To reduce youths' favorable attitudes towards meth use
- To positively impact youth's future intentions regarding meth use

According to the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's (CSAP, 2007) Centers for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPTs), effective prevention programs target both risk and protective factors. The "Tools for Schools" program focused on the following risk and protective factors—

#### Risk Factors

- Friends who use
- Favorable attitudes towards substance abuse
- Early initiation of substance abuse

#### Protective Factors

- Healthy beliefs and standards
- Opportunities

Finally, the strategy employed in this program is best described as education, one of the proven practices of effective prevention programs (CSAP, 2007)

#### **Target Audience**

The primary target audiences for the 10 PowerPoint programs we developed about meth were middle and high school youth. Our strategy was universal rather than indicated or selective because so little is known about why specific youth become involved in meth use. While the primary target audience was youth in public schools, we also developed the programs with an eye toward making them useful to many other settings—youth in home school situations, camps, short-term after-school programs and others.

The Montana OPI selected Power Points as the medium for providing education to youth about the dangers of meth for several reasons. First, these are not the stodgy Power Points that you may recall from the corporate board room (which resemble little more than high-tech overheads), but each is animated, with lively graphics, color, sounds and motion which were designed by youth to reach youth. OPI also selected Power Points as the means of educational delivery because of the rural, dispersed nature of our state, which lacks access to high-powered technology or equipment. In fact, many schools still lack a PowerPoint projector in our state. This initiative was one means of getting schools to upgrade their equipment.

In addition, a sizeable portion of teachers are not yet familiar with using technology in the classroom and this method was deemed as an appropriate strategy for getting out consistent information that would be easy to use by most teachers. In our early workshops to train teachers, we learned from workshop evaluations that in some areas 75% of teachers had never used PowerPoint as an educational tool. Finally, OPI felt that this format would make the programs easy

to download for teachers from the central OPI website if they could not locate a CD that had been provided to each school.

Perhaps a story would be illustrative at this point of the need for good, consistent educational information. In our state, there is currently a massive public awareness campaign about meth being aired on all the major media outlets—radio, television, newspapers, billboards. So far, a private individual has spent more than \$12 million to underwrite this graphic, often described as “gritty,” campaign to stigmatize the use of meth. However, the campaign provides little factual information but instead relies exclusively on extreme scare tactics. While bombarded with these terrifying ads, youth lack accurate, factual information from most other outlets.

One day, in a workshop conducted for teens, a teenage girl raised her hand in the back of the room and said, “Isn’t it true that meth comes from cows?” That one caught me off-guard for a minute and I had to think. Then I realized—she had heard about methane gas, and thought it was the same. And yes, cows are one source of methane gas. Once I explained the difference, I could see a sign of relief come over her. She shared that she had been afraid to go out to her family’s corrals because she was afraid of being affected by meth. Awareness without education can be misleading.

The Power Points were developed to be used by teachers and other community educators with these youth and could be delivered in a variety of locations. The programs could also be taught by peer mentors or other youth instructors, but at this time, we have no evidence that this is occurring. Four Power Points were specifically targeted to middle school youth, and six Power Points were aimed at high school youth. A bonus “Jeopardy-style” game was also included to help youth test their knowledge about meth after viewing several of the programs. In addition to more formal evaluations, this activity provides teachers with a quick way to see if youth have learned critical information from the programs.

For this initiative, we developed 10 PowerPoint presentations with complete lesson plans and supplemental activities that could be used by a variety of educators and in a variety of settings. As a team, we worked together to develop effective presentation for use by the following user groups:

- Food and consumer science teachers—meth impacts on body image, nutrition and family interactions
- Health Enhancement Teachers—meth impacts on physical activity and long term health
- School nurses—meth impacts on oral health, ability to concentrate in school
- Meth impacts on families and communities
- Meth impacts on youth, achievement in school, jobs
- Youth program volunteers—meth impacts on communities, danger signs
- Meth impacts on indoor air quality, health, housing
- County health officials—meth impacts on health, well-being

- Faith community—meth impacts on community well-being
- PTA/PTO/PAC groups
- Safe and Drug-Free School Counselors
- School advisory classes (the old home room)
- Department of Public Health and Human Services personnel—especially State Incentive Grant recipients and Addictive and Mental Disorders personnel

## **Program Design and Content**

### ***Type of program***

“Tools for Schools” is best described as a school enrichment program since it was primarily designed for use by teachers and can easily be delivered during in-school time. However, as indicated above, the program content can be used at short-term programs, at camps, in after-school programs and even at regular 4-H club meetings. The programs were designed secondarily to be used by community educators such as 4-H leaders, other youth program instructors, home school groups and anyone who is concerned about the health of young people.

### ***Methods used to deliver the program***

“Tools for Schools” involves three main delivery strategies—the PowerPoint programs, supplemental experiential activities with each program, and extended learning options for those who wish to go further. Each of the 10 PowerPoint programs consists of a core educational program of no more than 20 minutes’ length. The programs are designed to fit well into a regular 50-minute class period and still allow for discussion and extended learning opportunities. Each program comes with a detailed lesson plan and specific narration suggestions for the educator. The programs are stand-alone and do not need to be presented in any specific order or sequence. All come with detailed delivery tips and suggestions, even when to advance from one slide to the next. Some programs are self-timed and do not require much instructor involvement in delivering the program.

Each program also includes suggestions for additional learning activities and web links for extended learning. Additional resources are also listed for teachers and community educators to delve into more depth on specific topics. Hands-on activities to reinforce program content are included in many of the programs.

Each of the programs is designed to provide a teacher/instructor with everything needed and more. While we were primarily charged with developing lessons plans for teachers, the reality is that these programs could be taught by parents, youth group leaders, and even teens themselves. To date, however, we have not encountered any teens yet who has felt comfortable enough with the subject matter around meth to teach the programs to other youth, but expect that this could easily happen with high school students using the programs with middle school students.

### ***Curricula and/or educational materials***

One of the goals of the “Tools for Schools” meth prevention initiative was to develop easy-to-use, research-based materials that could be delivered in a single class period or educational setting. As a result, the CD-ROM contains 10 stand-alone PowerPoint programs with lessons plans for anyone to use with targeted youth groups. Most of the programs include music, sound effects, animation, and “cool” graphics to capture the attention of today’s young people. Each disk also includes a “Jeopardy-style” game to test knowledge retention. Ten program-specific evaluation instruments are also provided so that teacher and other instructors can assess student learning and retention following the delivery of each program. Evaluations are distributed by teachers to their students, and mailed back to us where we compile and analyze the data and return the results to each classroom teacher and to our funders in a summary report.

Each program also includes a list of additional resources and web links for extended learning opportunities. Tools for Schools is also part of a larger meth prevention community tool kit that includes videos, DVDs, posters, bookmarks, information booklets and other additional resources to expand on learning beyond the 10 PowerPoint programs.

The 10 programs are as follows—

#### Middle School Students (6-8<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Meth Basics—information about the ingredients used in meth production, the affects of meth use, and cycle of addiction.
- Meth and Weight—why some people make the wrong decision to use meth as a weight loss strategy and what other, more positive steps you can take to achieve your desired body image.
- Meth and Sports—profile of a well-known assistant football coach who was caught up in the meth scene and how it destroyed his hopes and dreams and how youth can avoid similar outcomes
- Resistance Skills—using the well-known and proven techniques of eight skills for saying no to drugs and other anti-social behaviors.

#### High School Students (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)

- Meth Basics—more advanced information about the history, development, and misuse of meth and its affects on users.
- Meth and Friends—what is friendship, how to help friends who are involved in drugs, and how meth can negatively affect friendships.
- Meth and Family—a personalized story about how meth affected one family and what family members can do about their concerns related to drugs
- Media Literacy—focuses on the five techniques used by advertisers to sell products and how youth can create their own anti-meth ads. Groups of students create their own anti-meth ad at the end of this lesson.
- Meth and Invincibility—through the personal story of one teenage girl who died from meth use, teens’ sense of “it can’t happen to me” are confronted.

Youth delve into a case study and discuss how they would have helped a friend in a similar situation.

- Meth and Community—how meth use and production affects the entire community, not just the users, and what individuals and communities can do to counter meth and other drug issues at the local level.

### ***Partnerships or collaborations***

The MSU Meth Prevention Initiative is a collaborative effort between several parties. First and foremost, faculty and staff at MSU came together to collaborate on this project. Our core design team consisted of seven faculty—a youth specialist, a nutrition specialist, a family life specialist, a housing and indoor environmental specialist, a medical doctor, a social norms expert, and an AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteer with experience in prevention. In addition, we recruited a 4-H youth member as a part of the design team to help ensure that the final products were youth-oriented and engaging. The youth's involvement modeled the principles of a youth/adult partnership and kept our work relevant and tied to youth perspectives.

### Team Members

Members of the team brought a wide variety of experience to this initiative. Kirk Astroth is a youth specialist and he was the lead developer of the 1987 "4-H CARES" (Chemical Abuse Resistance Education Series) curriculum that was selected in 1989 as one of the Federal Office of Substance Abuse Prevention's (OSAP) "Twenty Exemplary Programs" award. The following year, President George H.W. Bush designated the program as the 174<sup>th</sup> in his "Thousand Points of Light" awards. Astroth has extensive experience in substance abuse education.

Mike Vogel is the MSU Extension Housing and Environmental Air Quality Specialist and has developed a meth community tool kit which includes the "Tools for Schools" CD resource. Jeff Linkenbach is the Director of the Montana Social Norms Project and has written extensively on using a social norms approach to changing community perceptions about drug use. Dr. Gary Lande, another member of our team, is a medical doctor and teaches courses on campus. Sandy Bailey is an MSU family life specialist and helped in the development of the PowerPoint programs on friendships and family dynamics. Finally, Lynn Paul is an MSU food and nutrition specialist who brought her expertise in body image and weight related to meth abuse.

### Community Advisory

In addition, we assembled a diverse advisory group to help with the design of the meth programs. This group consisted of more than 20 community leaders and youth who provided input and feedback all through the development phase. We met face-to-face three times, and committee members received materials via email or regular mail throughout the development phase. The advisory committee included three youth, a DARE officer, prevention specialists, teachers, faith community representatives, political representatives, health educators, law enforcement, tribal representatives, and parents.

### Public Partnerships

This project benefited from financial support from the Montana OPI, the Montana Department of Justice, the MSU Social Norms Project, and MSU Extension. The OPI connection provided beneficial connections to local schools and school teachers to ensure delivery of the program across the state. The Department of Justice provided funds to assist with evaluation component.

### **Program Evaluation**

From the outset, the “Tools for Schools” program included evaluation as a key component for assessing both process and outcome results. As indicated above, continuous feedback was sought from a wide variety of groups during the development phase of the project.

#### ***Process***

During the development phase, the initial materials were pilot-tested with more than 200 students. Their feedback and suggestions made for continuous improvement and changes in the original programs.

In addition, our team has conducted 23 workshops around the state of Montana for teachers and other community educators to help them know how to deliver the programs to youth. These half-day workshops were arranged and coordinated by the OPI. Participants received a CD of the programs, handouts of key materials, tips for teaching the materials effectively, and meth-specific information.

In addition, the “Tools for Schools” program was showcased at three statewide conferences—the annual Montana Education Association conference for teachers, the MSU Wheeler Conference, and the Montana Parent/Teacher Association Conference.

To date, more than 700 teachers and community educators across Montana have been trained to use these materials as they were designed to be delivered. A wealth of evaluation data has been collected from these trainings, and below is a sample from some of the workshops.

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Evaluation Summary—Billing Meth Workshop  
December 9, 2005

Although more than 100 people attended the meth workshop session in Billings, only 58 completed evaluation forms were returned. The following is a summary of these results.

Evaluation of the Instructor (Scale of 1-5, with 1 =Poor and 5=Excellent)

1.	Clearly explained purpose of program	4.72
2.	Was well prepared and organized	4.64
3.	Presentation was understandable	4.70
4.	Demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject	4.74
5.	Allowed questions and interaction with the participants	4.52
6.	Stimulated me to think about how to use the information	4.65
7.	Visual aids were appropriate for the presentation	4.67

Evaluation of Program

8.	Was of educational value	4.72
9.	Covered the material expected	4.75
10.	Materials distributed were helpful	4.80
11.	Overall program rating	4.77
12.	How useful was today's workshop on the OPI "Tools for Schools" Meth Prevention Education Power Points? (Scale of 1=Not Useful, 7=Very Useful)	

Fifty-six percent of those returning the surveys marked a "7" on their forms, while an additional 30% marked "6", indicating that the majority found the workshop useful.

13.	How likely do you think you will be to use any of these Power Points? (Scale of 1=Not Likely, 7=Very Likely)	
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Fifty-seven percent of those returning the surveys marked "7", while another 28% marked a "6" on their forms, indicating that the majority plan to use at least one of the programs in their classrooms.

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Thanks to support from OPI, more than 4,000 CDs have been distributed to teachers and other community educators across the state of Montana. In fact, interest has been so great in these materials that the initial order of 3,000 CDs was quickly depleted and more disks had to be burned. Moreover, the CD of educational programs has captured the interest of educators in other states and copies have been provided to both Extension and non-Extension educators in Oklahoma, Illinois, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Kansas, to name just a few states.

Since the public dissemination of these materials in the fall of 2005, we have been collecting data from teachers and other community educators who have used the programs with students. Unfortunately, OPI is not in the position of forcing teachers to use the evaluations and return them to us. However, they have been instrumental in promoting the use of the evaluation tools to teachers, and several schools are sending us their forms for compilation. Here is just a sample of the evaluation data we have received and which were reported in our Federal report this year:

As a result of the Meth in Montana Tools for Schools initiative, these impacts were measured:

- 80% of students could correctly identify at least 2 toxic ingredients used to make meth
- 80% of students could identify and name 3 negative effects of taking meth
- 100% of students responded that there is never a good reason to take meth
- 92% of students could name at least 1 positive alternative to losing weight
- 96% of students could correctly identify signs of meth abuse
- 97% of students said that they would never try meth in the future
- 87% of students could identify two things they would do to help a friend who might be involved in meth use

Here is some additional specific evaluation information from two of the programs presented at a middle school in central Montana as illustrative of the results we are collecting from schools:

After watching the "Meth Basics" (6-8th grade) program,

- 76% of students could identify at least 2 toxic ingredients used in the manufacture of meth
- 87% of students would identify and name 3 negative effects of taking meth
- 63% of students correctly responded that there is never a good reason to take meth (surprised though so many missed this—I think it's a poorly worded question)
- 100% indicated that they would be unlikely to take meth in the future
- 81% of students could name 2 things they would do if they suspected a friend was involved with meth use.
- 96% of students could name 1 positive alternative to lose weight
- 76% of students could correctly identify signs of meth abuse
- Students were asked how likely they thought they would be to try meth in the future. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being "very unlikely" and 7 representing "highly likely," the average response was 1.6 with 81% of students selecting "very unlikely" while 19% were "unlikely."

These results are positive and indicate that the majority of students have learned information as a result of participating in the program. In addition, we sought to learn something about future intentions by asking about how likely they were to take meth in the future—which a large number indicating that they would not.

Students who watched the “Meth & Weight” PowerPoint (Grades 6-8) presentation in Lewistown, Montana reported the following results:

- 94% could correctly name two reasons why people might begin to use meth—giving such reasons as peer pressure, to lose weight, to stay awake for a test or study or to appear “cool.”
- 98% of the students could also name two negative consequences for using meth, ranging from such responses as bad teeth, odor, jail, loss of friends or family, and strangely, cancer.
- 87% of students correctly identified all the ways pushers might try to use to convince someone to use meth.
- 96% of students indicated that it is NEVER safe to use meth.
- The final question asked students how likely they thought they would be to try meth in the future. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being “very unlikely” and 7 representing “highly likely,” the average response was 1.6, with 81% selecting “very unlikely.”

***Outcomes and Impacts***

Because there are a number of efforts ongoing in our state to address the meth problem, it is difficult to lay claim to an exclusive influence on meth use and trends. However, data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered by the OPI (2005) indicates that meth use among students who are in our target audience has declined.

Lifetime Meth Usage Rates as reported  
by Teens from the MT YRBS Survey

<u>Year</u>	<u>7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders</u>	<u>High School Students</u>
1999	7.5%	13.5%
2001	5.7	12.6
2003	4.6	9.3
2005	2.8	8.3

The YRBS survey is administered every 2 years, and so new data will be collected soon and reported next year. However, usage rates are declining among our youth.

In addition, youth attitudes and perceptions about the negative effects of meth use are being positively impacted as well. In a “Prevention Needs Assessment” survey of middle school and high school students administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, results showed that 93% of respondents perceived meth use as having a “great risk.” Moreover, Montana teens’ perception of risk is 10% higher than teens’ perception nationwide. In addition, 73% of teens ranked using meth once or twice as having “great risk” compared to only 54% of teens nationally (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2006).

In addition, the Montana Office of the Attorney General recently released this data in a statewide report (January 24, 2007) which can be found on their website at: <http://doj.mt.gov/news/releases2007/20070124.asp> This report highlighted some of the progress being made across Montana on the meth issue.

**Supply may be decreasing** – Data from the Montana Board of Crime Control showed 284 methamphetamine seizures in 2006, compared with 583 in 2005. The board collects information from local jurisdictions and drug task forces.

**Use appears to be declining** – According to the semi-annual Drug Testing Index, Montana's overall rate of employees testing positive for meth fell more than 70% between 2005 and 2006. It was the biggest decrease in the country.

**Meth-related crime is decreasing** – Information reported to the Montana Board of Crime Control showed the total number of meth-related offenses dropped from 1,259 in 2005 to 589 in 2006.

**Social and economic impacts remain high** – The Department of Corrections reported that 50% of Montana's adult inmates are incarcerated due to meth-related crimes, with a cost to the state of between \$18,000 and \$29,000 per inmate. Likewise, 52% of the parents of children placed in out-of-home foster care have lost custody of their children due to meth-related abuse.

### ***Communication to stakeholders***

Program evaluation results are shared with schools that present the programs and send us the raw evaluation data for compilation and analysis. In addition, periodic reports are provided to both OPI and Department of Justice staff of the results. Following each workshop, we provide summaries of the results from the training workshops to OPI as well.

In May 2006, I was invited to share the evaluation results of our efforts at the statewide Wheeler Conference (named for former U.S. Senator Burton K. Wheeler) on methamphetamines. This periodic conference focuses on policy initiatives and brings together more than 200 key leaders, policy makers, and politicians to focus on a specific issue. The conference topic this year was methamphetamine. I was the only Extension person given a spot on the program to share evaluation results from our efforts. My remarks were posted on the Wheeler website.

This project has also been shared as a poster session in May 2006 at the Children, Youth and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) conference and was selected as a seminar presentation for the 2006 NAE4-HA conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In addition, we have conducted training workshops on the program at the Western Regional Leaders' Forum in 2006 in Salt Lake City and at our own state 4-H Leadership Forum.

In 2005, the Montana Local Government Center featured our meth project in their publication, the Montana Policy Review. A collaborative article about Extension's response to the meth issue can be found at: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwlgc/MPR%20files/MPR05/MPRs05.html>

The program results have also been reported in our Extension annual report and in our annual Federal program report. Press releases and news stories have been developed by our Extension Communications staff and sent around the state to all newspapers as well, reporting impacts and results of this effort.

### **Program Sustainability**

Even though the original grant from OPI ended in 2006, we have continued to support and expand this meth prevention initiative utilizing our own resources. Workshops to train community educators continue (most recently I conducted a workshop in January 2007) and we allocated funds to burn 1,000 more CDs to meet the continuing demand for copies of the programs. In addition, all the programs are available for download on the OPI website ([www.opi.state.mt.us/meth](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/meth)) as well as on the Attorney General's website (<http://www.methfreemt.org/education.asp>). Because the materials have been developed, the only major expense at this time is travel to train others to use the materials. Interest from Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parent/Teacher Organizations (PTOs) is increasing and workshops to train them are continuing.

Currently, we are utilizing our own funds to develop two additional PowerPoint programs aimed at Native American youth. We are contracting with Native American educators at Stone Child Tribal College on the Rocky Boy Reservation to develop one program for middle school students and another for high school students that will be culturally relevant for these audiences.

### **Replication**

"Tools for Schools" has been embraced across the state as an easy-to-use resource. More than 4,000 CDs have been distributed and schools, community educators, and Extension agents are actively involved in presenting the programs to youth in a variety of settings.

As indicated in previous sections, interest in our materials has been great in other states. The adaptability of the materials ensure that they are very useful to all kinds of groups, and although some of the stories on the Power Points are specific to Montana, the lessons learned are transferable to others. The personal dimension of the stories just makes them all the more real, regardless of what state you are from.

We are currently in discussion with several groups to provide these resources for groups outside our state. The National Conference of State Legislatures and the National Association of Counties are both interested in utilizing our youth materials as a part of their educational efforts to combat the meth problems. In addition, the National Congress of American Indians is interested in using our materials, especially when we complete the two additional programs with a Native American focus.

## Rationale and Importance of Program

Meth use is a recurring and alarming trend in the West, particularly in rural communities. Unfortunately, there are very few educational resources available for teaching youth about the dangers of meth use and positive health choices. The MSU Meth Prevention Education Initiative's "**Tools for Schools**" program is a unique resource for educating young people about the dangers of methamphetamines. While there are a number of resources targeted to adults, there are few developmentally appropriate educational programs for youth. Moreover, some of the existing youth programs rely too exclusively on extreme scare tactics to deliver a message that can only be described as "health terrorism." These approaches are designed to scare youth into healthy decisions. Years of research show that scare tactics are not effective at changing long-term behavior.

"**Tools for Schools**" is a set of creative and dynamic programs that draw upon research in positive youth development to bring a message of hope and empowerment to youth as they wrestle with the difficult choices and issues that confront them daily. Youth tell us they like this programs because they aren't preachy or naive in their presentation. These programs help youth explore positive alternatives to drug use, given suggestions for helping friends or family members who may be involved in drug use, provide support for resistance skills, and give insights into understanding media influences on daily decision-making. Participants in these programs tell us that they retain important information, know how to help friends who might be involved with drugs, and indicate that they are very unlikely to get involved in drugs in the future (aspirations).

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