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## MADIGAN ANNOUNCES INITIATIVES TO FIGHT NEW FORMS OF METH PRODUCTION IN ILLINOIS

### ***Attorney General, Lawmakers, Law Enforcement & Pharmacists Join Forces to Curb Sale of Key Meth Ingredient***

Chicago – Joined by lawmakers, law enforcement officials and pharmacists, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today unveiled two initiatives aimed at curtailing the rise of new production methods of methamphetamine in Illinois.

Madigan visited three Illinois communities that are among the hardest hit by the meth epidemic, where authorities have seen an emergence of small-scale meth production techniques that make the drug harder to detect. Meeting with officials in Quincy, Cahokia and Danville, Madigan said she will work with state Sen. William Haine and Rep. Jerry Costello II in the Legislature's upcoming veto session to extend the program that allows pharmacies to block illegal sales of pseudoephedrine, the key meth ingredient. The Attorney General also unveiled a new awareness campaign targeting people who buy pills for meth cooks.

"When meth first hit our communities, we hit back hard to drive meth makers and users out of Illinois," Attorney General Madigan said. "But meth is a unique drug. It's like a virus that mutates, so we must retool our responses to how this drug is made."

For over a decade, Madigan has worked to combat the scourge of meth use and production in Illinois, passing tough laws cracking down on the sale of pseudoephedrine and strengthening penalties for those convicted of meth-related offenses. Implemented in 2006, the Methamphetamine Precursor Control Act restricts consumers from buying more than two packages of pseudoephedrine products at a time or products with more than 7,500 milligrams of pseudoephedrine in a 30-day period. Customers also must show photo identification and sign a purchasing log maintained by pharmacies. The restrictions cut in half the number of meth labs reported, from 761 in 2006 to 362 in 2007.

Despite these successes, Madigan said drug users have adapted, turning to so-called "one-pot" or "shake 'n bake" meth production, which can be accomplished using legal amounts of pseudoephedrine. They use small amounts of pseudoephedrine to mix the drug in two-liter plastic bottles, which produces three to seven grams of the drug.

To fight this emergence of small-scale meth production, Madigan, Haine and Costello will work to amend the law during the fall session in Springfield to make permanent a pilot system used by pharmacies to track the sale of pseudoephedrine. The system, which has operated since June 2010 and is set to expire in January, allows pharmacies to block pseudoephedrine sales if the sale would exceed the legal purchase amount allowed by law.

Madigan was joined today by Haine, Costello and state Sen. John Sullivan, and state Reps. Chad Hays and Jil Tracy. Also attending today's press conferences were representatives of the Illinois Sheriff's Association, the Illinois State Police, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, Illinois Retail Merchants Association, Illinois Pharmacists Association, Illinois State's Attorneys Association, Illinois Department of Corrections, the Meth Project, and law enforcement in Adams, St. Clair and Vermilion counties.

"As a former state's attorney, I've witnessed firsthand how meth dealers are causing damage to individuals, families and the society as a whole. We need to continue to pass laws that help us crack down on these criminals who are corrupting our communities," Sen. Haine said. "I look forward to working with the Attorney General to get legislation passed so that law enforcement has the tools they need to put criminals who manufacture and deal methamphetamine out of business."

"The effects of meth are devastating, widespread, and way too frequent," Rep. Costello said. "This legislation will create a permanent, statewide PSE tracking system to block bulk sales of PSE and help curb the production of meth in Illinois."

The system has been a key tool to target meth users and drug makers. From June 2010 to the present, pharmacies used the system to block the sale of more than 70,000 boxes of pseudoephedrine-based cold medication. The system also allows law enforcement to target pill shoppers traveling from pharmacy to pharmacy to purchase legal pseudoephedrine amounts and stockpile the ingredient to make meth.

"The National Precursor Log Exchange tracking system is an invaluable tool to contain domestic production with the ability to detect activity from small, homegrown labs," said Illinois State Police Director Hiram Grau. "Our priority is to eradicate and dismantle these labs before they develop into sophisticated organized crime drug operations that can have a fatal impact on Illinois communities and beyond."

Also today, Attorney General Madigan and partnering agencies launched a campaign to educate the public and put on notice the growing numbers of people who act as pill buyers for meth users or producers. Posters will be placed in pharmacies across the state to send a message that these pill shoppers are contributing to a crime every time they buy pills for a meth cook.

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[Return to October 2011 Press Releases](#)

