

ILLINOIS METH PROJECT

Illinois Meth Project Survey Shows Increased Awareness Among Teens about the Dangers of Meth

Data shows teens less likely to try Meth, more likely to discuss drug with parents

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois—January 21, 2009—The Illinois Meth Project today released results of the 2008 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions*. The new survey shows that, in Central Illinois, teens' attitudes toward the dangers of methamphetamine use have shifted substantially since the Illinois Meth Project initiated its Meth prevention campaign in early 2008. Teens are now more aware of the dangers of taking Meth, more likely to discuss Meth with their parents, and less likely to try Meth even once.

The new survey shows Central Illinois teens are more acutely aware of the dangers of first-time Meth use. About half (53%) of teens now see "great risk" in trying Meth, a seven point increase since 2007. Perceptions of the specific risks associated with Meth also changed significantly in the past year. A solid majority of teens now say that trying Meth, just once, risks getting hooked on the drug (88%, up 6 points), dying (76%, up 8 points), stealing (81%, up 8 points), having unwanted sex (83%, up 8 points), suffering tooth decay (74%, up 9 points), neglecting hygiene (79%, up 8 points), or turning into someone they don't want to be (88%, up 7 points).

More than three quarters of teens report that the Illinois Meth Project ads make them less likely to try Meth, make them more aware of the risks of using Meth, and help them understand they cannot try Meth even once.

"Meth remains a huge problem throughout Illinois. Raising awareness about this drug's dangers is the first step in prevention," said Attorney General Lisa Madigan. "The Illinois Meth Project is a key component in educating our youth of the dangers of Meth. We need to expand this effective prevention campaign to all of downstate Illinois."

Treatment, law enforcement and social services data confirm the need for Meth prevention and public awareness. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, methamphetamine is the principal drug of threat to central and southern Illinois.

As a key partner of the Illinois Meth Project, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association has worked with Senator Durbin to secure federal funds in support of the Project. "We are very encouraged by the data. Not only do more teens think that there is a serious risk in trying Meth, more parents and teens are talking about the problem," said Greg Sullivan, Executive Director of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association. "The conversations at home have a real effect, and as attitudes and perceptions continue to shift we expect a decline in Meth use."

The Illinois Meth Project is a large-scale prevention program aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy and community outreach. At the heart of the campaign are advertisements that show teens the devastating impact that Meth can have and encourage them to never try Meth—"Not Even Once."

-more-

The Project launched the first wave of its anti-Meth advertising campaign in the Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign region in February 2008. Earlier this month, the Project launched a second wave of advertising in the Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign region and simultaneously expanded its campaign into southeastern Illinois.

The *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* is conducted periodically by the Illinois Meth Project to track attitudes and behaviors related to methamphetamine in the state. The first survey was conducted prior to the launch of the Project's media campaign.

The 2008 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed from November 24 through December 12 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The survey details findings from a random sample of 1,301 middle and high school students, ages 12 to 17, across the Springfield, Decatur and Champaign regions. The complete report can be obtained on the Illinois Meth Project's website at www.illinoismethproject.org.

About the Illinois Meth Project

The Illinois Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use. Launched in February 2008, the Illinois Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Illinois Meth Project is established by the Meth Project, a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. The Meth Project is supported by the Siebel Foundation.

For more information, visit www.illinoismethproject.org.

Media Contacts:

Steve Mange
217-299-0753
smange@illinoismethproject.org

Stephanie Simon
312-988-2081
ssimon@webershandwick.com

Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2008 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions* demonstrate that, compared to the 2007 benchmark survey, Central Illinois teens are more aware of the dangers of taking Meth. The following highlights some of the survey's key findings. For the complete report, please visit www.illinoismethproject.org.

Perceived Risks of Meth Use

- Since 2007, Central Illinois teens have come to view Meth use as more of a risk. 53% now believe there is “great risk” in taking Meth once or twice, up 7 points since 2007.
- Central Illinois teens are now more aware of the specific dangers of Meth use. Significant increases in perceptions of risk in trying Meth just once were reported in every one of the 14 risk areas measured, including tooth decay, dying, having sex with someone they don't want to, worse personal hygiene, stealing, turning into someone they don't want to be, suffering brain damage, becoming violent, losing control of themselves, being a negative influence on a younger sibling, getting hooked, becoming paranoid, making their problems worse and/or getting insomnia.

Advertising Effectiveness

- Teens in Central Illinois report seeing anti-meth advertising far more frequently in 2008 than they did in 2007 – 56% report seeing such ads at least once a week; only 25% made the same claim in 2007. They are also far more likely to report recently seeing anti-Meth TV commercials (82%, up 26 points).
- The majority report the Illinois Meth Project's ads clearly communicate the risks of Meth and agree the ads show that Meth:
 - Will make you act in a way you would not want to (90% agree strongly or somewhat with the statement)
 - Will make them look different than they normally do (89%)
 - Is dangerous to try just once (87%)
 - Affects many people's lives besides the user's (83%)
 - Is more dangerous than they had originally thought (83%)
 - Could cause problems in their town or school (78%)
- Central Illinois Teens report that the ads help them understand that you can't try Meth even once (76%), make them less likely to try or use Meth (77%), make them more aware of the risks of using Meth (76%), and give them new information about Meth (62%).
- Central Illinois Teens are less likely to report “never” having had a discussion with their parents about Meth in the past year (52%, down 7 points from 2007).