

**Western Governors' Association
Policy Resolution 06-5**

Sedona, Arizona
June 13, 2006

Methamphetamine and Drug Policy in the West

A. BACKGROUND

1. Arrests for drug abuse violations have been climbing steadily. In 2004 over 1.7 million people were arrested for drug abuse violations.
2. Drug abuse is also a common denominator for most offenders in the criminal justice system. More than two-thirds of local jail inmates (68%) were found to be dependent on drugs or alcohol or abusing them, according to a 2002 survey of men and women held in local jails.
3. Methamphetamine is a long acting addictive substance that strongly stimulates various reward centers in the brain leading to high potential for abuse and dependence. Effects derived from heavy doses of the drug coupled with associated sleep deprivation and malnutrition often lead to paranoia, aggression, hallucination, hyperactivity, confusion, anxiety and violent behavior.
4. According to the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, nearly 12 million Americans have tried methamphetamine. The meth problem is national in scope. According to the DEA, 12.3 million Americans have tried meth at least once, up 40% over 2000 and 150% over 1996.
5. Over the past 5 years, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming have reported a 100% increase in meth-related arrests, while Colorado, California, Idaho, Kansas, Montana and South Dakota have reported more than a 90% increase. Nine Western states list meth as their number one drug problem, and four more list it as one of their major problems, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency.
6. Meth abuse causes legal, medical, environmental and social problems for counties and states. Local governments and citizens must pay for investigating, closing and cleaning meth labs, making arrests, holding lawbreakers, trying them, providing treatment for addicts, and protecting affected children. Oklahoma estimates that the average meth case costs \$350,000, including \$54,000 to treat the user, \$12,000 in child welfare services and \$5,000 to decontaminate any meth lab. According to the National Association of Counties, the upsurge of meth use has increased the workload of law enforcement and social services in 82% of counties, creating a heavy financial burden on counties and governments.

7. Methamphetamine comes from two sources: large-scale “super labs”, mainly in Mexico, and small-scale, local meth labs. Between 65% and 80% of the meth supply comes from super labs and local meth labs provide the rest. As a result of implementation of pseudoephedrine controls by state and local governments, local meth production appears to be declining however, international smuggling of highly refined meth continues to keep supplies at high levels.
8. In response to this threat, the federal government and states are devoting more resources to methamphetamine eradication. Innovative partnerships among city, county and state governments have been formed for detection and apprehension of meth traffickers, and for cleanup and safety efforts. Efforts to implement international treaties limiting the exportation of bulk pseudoephedrine and related products are an essential component for reducing mass production of methamphetamine in countries outside of the United States.
9. Pseudoephedrine, and to a lesser extent ephedrine, norpseudoephedrine and phenylpropanolamine, used in many cold medicines is a key ingredient in meth. Most states have enacted laws restricting the sale of such cold medicines to reduce meth production in small-scale local labs by choking off the supply of this necessary ingredient. Precursor control legislation recently added to the Patriot Act is important but states that don’t have similar laws cannot prosecute under state jurisdiction and will have to wait for federal prosecution under the Patriot Act.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice recommends the use of drug courts to fight meth addiction and trafficking. Drug courts combine drug rehabilitation services with legal requirements to complete treatment, as well as longer treatment periods, an emphasis on addressing simultaneous mental health problems, and community supervision and monitoring. Drug courts also help children affected by meth by providing health care, educational and child protective services. Already in the West, Arizona, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah have seen success using drug courts to intervene and manage meth offenders, having greater success than jail terms or probation in reducing recidivism and in reuniting families

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Western Governors believe that the far-reaching destructive impact of methamphetamine manufacturing cannot be ignored. The public safety, public health, economic and environmental threat from methamphetamine labs is immediate.
2. Methamphetamine traffickers do not respect state or national borders. Methamphetamine is a national problem requiring law enforcement partnerships at all levels of government and with foreign governments to effectively interdict.
3. Law enforcement must be coordinated with comprehensive prevention, intervention and treatment strategies. These strategies must be implemented based on scientifically validated designs that address both individuals at risk and the risk factors in the communities in which they reside. Early identification and intervention for families in

drug crisis is essential to stopping the cycle of abuse and dependence. Effective strategies are comprehensive, coordinated, long term and include participation from all sectors of a community. Innovative programs like the Montana Meth Project, which uses graphic and violent public service advertisements, may have an effect on young people's attitudes about meth.

4. The Governors believe incarceration alone is not the only answer for dealing with drug offenders. Alternatives such as drug courts, family courts, prison-based treatment services, and increased availability of non-prison-based treatment options are essential. Studies have shown that in many cases these alternatives lead to better treatment outcomes and lower relapse and recidivism rates, which increase public safety.
5. Congress should refrain from reducing or removing vital funding sources for methamphetamine lab cleanup. Such funds should be available to all states facing the continuing problem of methamphetamine lab cleanup.
6. Western Governors urge the Administration to work with foreign governments to restrict the foreign production and sale of pseudoephedrine to legitimate uses and users.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Western Governors' Association shall post this resolution to its web site to be referred to and transmitted as necessary.
2. WGA shall continue to monitor this issue and to report to the Governors as necessary.