



Anti-meth campaign kicks off

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CASPER, Wyo. (AP) - The Wyoming Meth Project has launched a campaign to prevent young people from trying the highly addictive drug with a barrage of television, radio and print advertisements.

Project leaders announced the beginning of the campaign Monday in Casper, hoping to dissuade teens from trying methamphetamine, a synthetic stimulant that can be swallowed, snorted, smoked or injected.

Wyoming is the fifth state to introduce the anti-meth program. It was first implemented in Montana in 2005, when the state was ranked fifth in the country for meth abuse. Meth use among adults dropped 72 percent and use among teens dropped 45 percent within two years of the program's start. The project has also been implemented in Arizona, Idaho and Illinois.

"This saturation campaign will provide opportunities to talk to youth," said Bill McDowell, Meth Project advisory board chairman. "It calls upon parents, community leaders and local governments to reduce the plague upon the state."

Wyoming ranks second in the United States for the rate of meth use by teens age 12-17 and first in the nation for meth use by adults ages 18-25, according to 2006 statistics from the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

In 2007, 94 percent of Wyoming district court drug offenders were convicted of meth-related crimes, up from 68 percent in 2005, according to an annual report from the U.S Attorney's Office.

With the theme "Not Even Once," the Meth Project seeks to cut down on the number of Wyoming youth who experiment with the drug. The project includes advertisements telling the stories of people affected by meth.

The ads have received more than 40 industry awards, according to the Meth Project. The project was cited by the White House as one of the most effective prevention campaigns in history in 2006.

"Teens need things that are graphically charged and not authority-based to cut through the clutter and make an impact" said Chris Rose, executive director of the national Meth Project.

Meth Project officials said their saturation campaign will reach an average of 77 percent of Wyoming teens 4.1 times per week with TV commercials, radio spots and billboards.

*Also covered by

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