

HAWAII METH PROJECT

Hawaii Meth Project Releases Results of First-Ever Meth Use & Attitudes Survey

New Statewide Data Shows Nearly One Third of Teens See Little Risk in Trying Meth

HONOLULU, HAWAII—June 5, 2009—The Hawaii Meth Project today released the results of a statewide survey examining the attitudes and behaviors Hawaii teens, young adults, and parents have towards methamphetamine. The results of the first *Hawaii Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* found many of the state's young people have easy access to methamphetamine, believe the drug poses little to no risk, and offers a host of benefits.

The data show Hawaii teens and young adults are at high risk of exposure to Meth, with one in five teens (19%) and one in three young adults (36%) reporting Meth is readily available. One in 10 teens (11%) and one in five young adults (18%) also report they have close friends who use the drug.

Nearly one in three teens (30%) believes there is little or no risk in trying Meth. A substantial number of young people also report Meth use offers some benefits—35% believe it can help you lose weight, 24% believe it gives you energy, 21% believe it can make you happy, and 19% believe it helps alleviate boredom.

“Methamphetamine is one of the most destructive, highly addictive substances known,” said Bill Haning, M.D., Director of Graduate Affairs at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine and a foremost addiction expert. “It causes dramatic changes in the brain, irreversible physical damage, and a host of effects including depression, psychosis marked by extreme paranoia and hallucinations, and violent behavior. It’s alarming to see that many of our young people see little risk in giving methamphetamine a try, some even see benefits.”

The survey shows there is a relatively low level of disapproval of Meth use among teens and their peers—41% say their friends would not give them a “hard time” if they used Meth and 40% say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from using the drug. Half of teens (52%) have not discussed Meth with their parents in the past year.

“This survey clearly demonstrates our young people are dangerously unaware of the risks posed by Meth use,” said Dr. Kevin Kunz, President of the American Board of Addiction Medicine and a pioneer in the area of addiction medicine. “This lack of information coupled with very low levels of disapproval and parent-child communications puts our children at great risk. We know if we are able to increase perception of risk, so that it is in line with reality, and increase social disapproval, teens are less likely to use.”

The *Hawaii Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed in March and April 2009 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media prior to the launch of the Hawaii Meth Project’s statewide Meth prevention campaign in June 2009. The survey was conducted among randomly selected and representative samples of 1,065 teens, 318 young adults, and 400 parents of teens. To view the full survey report, please visit www.hawaiimethproject.org/Research.

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About the Hawaii Meth Project

The Hawaii Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the Islands. Launched in June 2009, the Hawaii Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Hawaii Meth Project is affiliated with 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. For more information, visit www.hawaiimethproject.org.

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Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2009 *Hawaii Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* reveal that many young people are unaware of the dangers of methamphetamine use, see potential benefits in taking the drug, find the drug readily available, and do not discuss the subject with their parents. The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings.

All statistics are sourced from the 2009 *Hawaii Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, which is available at www.hawaiimethproject.org/Research.

Availability and Usage

- 19% of teens and 36% of young adults say Meth is easy to acquire
- 11% of teens report having a close friend who uses Meth, and 18% have family members who have been treated for Meth
- 18% of young adults say they have a close friend who uses Meth, and 16% have family members who have been treated for Meth
- One in eight teens (12%) and one in four young adults (27 %) say they have been offered Meth

Perceptions of Meth

- 30% of teens and 17% of young adults say there is little or no risk to taking Meth once or twice
- 15% of teens and 7% of young adults say there is little to no risk in regular use
- Many teens and young adults see benefits in using Meth
 - 35% believe it helps you lose weight
 - 24% believe it gives you energy
 - 21% believe it makes you feel euphoric or very happy
 - 19% believe it helps relieve boredom

Social Approval and Parental Discussions

- 41% of teens say their friends would not give them a hard time for using Meth
- 40% of teens say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from using Meth
- 52% of teens say they have not discussed the subject of Meth with their parents in the past year