

MONTANA METH PROJECT

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New Montana Meth Project Survey Shows Dramatic Shift in Attitudes Toward Meth

Recently Released Montana Attorney General's Report Found Corresponding Reduction in Meth Use and Meth-Related Crime

HELENA, Mont.—March 7, 2007—The Montana Meth Project today released the results of its 2007 *Montana Meth Use & Attitudes Survey*. The statewide survey, gathered from a respondent group consisting of teens, young adults, and parents of teens, found that people's attitudes toward methamphetamine use have shifted substantially since the Meth Project initiated its first wave of anti-Meth advertising in September 2005. Compared to the 2005 Benchmark Survey conducted before the Meth Project launched, the new results show that people are now more aware of the dangers of Meth, more likely to disapprove of taking the drug, and more likely to have had parent-child discussions on the subject. A key finding showed that teens, the target audience of the Meth Project's media campaign, saw Meth as carrying a greater risk than any other drug if used just once – greater even than heroin.

The latest survey results also indicated that the Montana Meth Project is increasingly well-known across the state, and that its television and radio ads were a growing source of information for both teens and parents. Ninety-six percent of all parents surveyed had discussed Meth with their children in the past year (an increase of 13% since 2005), and more than half stated that these television ads had prompted the discussion.

"Increasing awareness is the first step to decreasing usage, and the Montana Meth Project has done a superlative job in that capacity," said Montana Attorney General Mike McGrath. "The latest data shows that Meth use is indeed declining in the state, and Meth-related crime has also dropped substantially. It's extremely satisfying to see these dramatic results in a relatively short time."

The Montana Attorney General's Office issued a report in January that found Meth use amongst teens had dropped 38%, while workplace testing saw a 70% decrease in use of the drug—a greater decline than in any other state. Additionally, Meth-related crime dropped a dramatic 53% between 2005 and 2006.

"These results show that we're making great strides in changing attitudes toward Meth," said Montana Meth Project Chairman Mike Gullledge. "People are talking and perceptions are shifting. This latest data is most encouraging, and when combined with the Attorney General's report, demonstrates we're on the right path."

A key finding of the survey showed that more teens (87%) reported there would be disapproval attached to trying Meth amongst their peer group. The data also showed that perceived benefits of Meth use had declined since the Meth Project's campaign launched, and concern over one's physical appearance due to Meth use had increased significantly.

A testament to the media campaign's effectiveness in the state, 81% of teens reported that the ads show that Meth is dangerous to try even once, with 75% saying that the ads show Meth is more destructive than they had originally thought. Virtually all respondents said they had seen an ad in the last month.

"These findings are truly impressive," said Geoff Feinberg, Vice President of GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, which conducted the survey. "At Roper, we measure the impact of many social marketing campaigns, and the Montana Meth Project stands out for its impressive ability to change attitudes toward Meth in such a short period of time."

The *Montana Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* is conducted periodically by the Montana Meth Project to track attitudes and behaviors related to methamphetamine in the state. The initial study was conducted in August 2005, prior to the launch of the Project's media campaign. The second survey was conducted in March 2006 following the first cycle of advertising.

The 2007 *Montana Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed from December 19, 2006 through February 7, 2007 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The survey group consisted of 3,151 respondents over three key groups in the state: teens (12-17); young adults (18-24); and parents of teens. A brief summary of survey results is attached. The complete report can be obtained on the Montana Meth Project's Web site at <http://www.montanameth.org>.

The Montana Meth Project also unveiled its new statewide media campaign today, including television, radio, and print advertising, that informs teens of the dangers of Meth use. While previous campaigns have dealt with risks to potential users of Meth, the new campaign focuses on the potential damage to family and friends. The new campaign will begin airing immediately, and includes four television spots by Darren Aronofsky, the acclaimed director of "Requiem for a Dream."

About the Montana Meth Project

The Montana Meth Project is a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Missoula, Montana. The Montana Meth Project implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. For more information, visit www.montanameth.org.

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Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2007 *Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* indicate that there have been dramatic shifts in attitudes toward Meth in Montana since the Montana Meth Project initiated its public education campaign. Compared to the 2005 Benchmark Survey, conducted prior to the launch of the Project, Montana teens, young adults, and parents are more aware of the dangers of taking Meth, more likely to disapprove of taking the drug, and more likely to have had parent-child discussions about the subject. The following highlights some of the survey's principal conclusions in three key areas – Campaign Awareness, Perceptions of Meth, and Behavioral Change. For the complete report, please visit www.montanameth.org.

Campaign Awareness

- 88% of teens, 89% of young adults, and 95% of parents had heard of the Montana Meth Project prior to taking the survey.
- Based on the Project's ads, more than 70% of respondents "strongly agree" that Meth is dangerous to try even once, will negatively affect your appearance and your behavior, and is more dangerous than they originally thought.
- 87% of teens and young adults, and 95% of parents feel the Montana Meth Project's "Paint the State" anti-Meth art contest has been "somewhat or very effective" in making people aware of the dangers of Meth.

Perceptions of Methamphetamine

Risk & Benefit

- Nearly all Montana teens (84%), young adults (88%), and parents (96%) believe there is risk in taking Meth just once or twice, and the majority believe there is "great" risk in doing so (65%, 70%, and 94%, respectively).
- Teens are significantly more likely to see great risk in trying Meth than in trying heroin (65% versus 56%, respectively).
- Few respondents — of any age — believe that taking Meth has any benefit, and this sentiment is at its highest level since the 2005 Benchmark Survey.
 - 87% of teens disagreed with the statement that taking Meth "makes you more popular," up from 67% in 2005.
 - 83% of teens disagreed with the statement that Meth "helps you escape your problems," compared to 56% percent in 2005.
 - 63% of teens disagreed with the statement that using Meth "makes you feel euphoric or very happy," up from 41% in 2005.
- Since 2005, the perception of specific negative effects resulting from Meth use has changed. Among teens, risks such as stealing, lack of attention to personal hygiene, and tooth decay increased significantly (11%, 7.5%, and 19% respectively).

Social Disapproval

- The great majority of Montana teens (87%), young adults (83%), and parents (97%) now voice “strong” disapproval of trying Meth even once or twice.
- Nearly 80% of teens now believe their friends will give them a “hard time” if they were to use Meth (almost a 10% increase in one year).
- 65% of teens and 71% of young adults say they have told their friends not to use Meth.

Behavioral Change

- This year, Montana teens and young adults reported having fewer friends who use Meth than in past surveys.
 - 10% of teens say they have close friends who use Meth—down by 33% since 1999.
 - 23% of young adults say they have friends who use Meth, but this number is also down 20% since 2006.
- Parent-child discussions about Meth are more frequent than in past surveys. In the 2007 survey, virtually all parents (96%, up 12% since 2005) say they have discussed the subject with their teen in the past year, and 92% say they had more than one conversation, a 15% increase. Moreover, 62% say they had a discussion with their child in the past month.
- Since 2005, television commercials have become by far the most common reason for parents to discuss the subject of Meth with their teens. In 2007, 51% of parents say television ads prompted the discussion.

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