

# **"THE METH EPIDEMIC ...AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS DRUG"**

*-- Newsweek<sup>1</sup>*

## **METHAMPHETAMINE CRISIS: HYPE OR FACT?**

"This is the beginning of a classic scare where you have horrible anecdotes substituted for epidemiological evidence and the media going with these easy stories," says Dr. Craig Reinerman of the University of California. "You don't want to mistake the worst case scenarios for the norm but that is what happens and it's true of every drug scare."<sup>2</sup>

### **IS USE EXPANDING?**

The federal government's own numbers show that "Incidence of methamphetamine use generally rose between 1992 and 1998. Since then, there have been no statistically significant changes."<sup>3</sup>

### **HOW MANY METH USERS ARE THERE?**

About 5% of Americans older than 12 have tried the drug. About 0.3% have actually used it in the last month, versus 0.1% for heroin and 1.0% for cocaine.<sup>4</sup>

### **CAN METH BE TREATED SUCCESSFULLY?**

Research shows successful treatment requires a significant commitment of time and resources as well as patience.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

### **HOW BIG IS THE "HOME COOKING" PROBLEM?**

Illegal activity is tough to measure but some officials estimate that about 20% of domestic meth consumption comes from the small-scale domestic labs using cold medications and other household materials.<sup>8</sup>

### **HOW EFFECTIVE ARE RESTRICTIONS ON "HOME COOKING" CHEMICALS?**

Since Oklahoma restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines officials report a 90% drop in meth lab seizures. Unfortunately the Mexican cartels immediately filled the gap. Seizures of a purer, smokeable form of methamphetamine known as "ice" are up 500%.<sup>9</sup>

## **Policy Should Reflect Facts, Not Hype!**

### **COMMON SENSE FOR DRUG POLICY**

**H. Michael Gray, Chair; Robert E. Field, Co-Chair**

**[www.CSDP.org](http://www.CSDP.org), [www.DrugWarFacts.org](http://www.DrugWarFacts.org), [www.DrugWarDistortions.org](http://www.DrugWarDistortions.org)**

1. Newsweek, Aug. 8, 2005. 2. "The Methamphetamine Epidemic – Less Than Meets The Eye," Drug War Chronicle, Aug. 5, 2005. 3. Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA (2004). 4. Ibid. 5. Rawson, Richard A., et al., "A multi-site comparison of psychological approaches for the treatment of methamphetamine dependence," *Addiction*, No. 99, pp. 708-717. 6. "The Matrix Model of Outpatient Stimulant Abuse Treatment: History and Description," Obert, Jeanne L., et al., *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, April-June 2000. 7. Methamphetamine Treatment Project at <http://www.methamphetamine.org/>. 8. Commissioner Michael Campion, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, US House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy & Human Resources, June 27, 2005. 9. "Stopping Meth Makers Hasn't Stopped Oklahoma's Meth Problems," AP July 28, 2005.