

# ILLINOIS METH PROJECT

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**For Immediate Release**

## **Illinois Meth Project Launches Large-Scale Meth Prevention Campaign**

*Aggressive media campaign to saturate TV, radio, and print with anti-Meth messaging*

**Springfield, Illinois—February 11, 2008**—The Illinois Meth Project today launched a campaign to prevent first-time methamphetamine use, targeting the Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign regions. The Illinois Meth Project is a research-based prevention program that educates people about the dangers of Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach.

Local and national law enforcement agencies report methamphetamine has reached critical levels, particularly in the state's central and southern regions. According to the University of Illinois, methamphetamine costs the state \$2 billion per year.<sup>i</sup> The U.S. Department of Justice cites methamphetamine as the primary drug threat to central and southern Illinois, with increasing prevalence in the Chicago area.<sup>ii</sup>

“In the past several years, we have taken steps to curb the soaring number of Meth labs in Illinois, but this fight is far from over,” said Attorney General Lisa Madigan, addressing the crowd of attendees at the campaign's official launch announcement in Springfield. “We also need to focus on prevention to curb demand. The Meth Project has delivered measurable results unlike any other prevention program I have seen, and I am excited to help introduce Illinois to this groundbreaking campaign.”

First launched in Montana in 2005, the Meth Project has demonstrated significant results in changing attitudes and behaviors towards Meth and is credited with reducing adult Meth use in the state by 70%,<sup>iii</sup> teen Meth use by 45%,<sup>iv</sup> and a 53% decline in Meth-related crimes.<sup>v</sup> When the program launched, Montana ranked #5 among states for Meth abuse; after two years, the state now ranks #39.<sup>vi</sup> The program has since expanded to Arizona and Idaho, with other states to follow later this year.

The Illinois Meth Project has adopted the Meth Project's innovative prevention program, featuring an aggressive saturation-level media campaign, including television, radio, and print advertising, and community outreach programs. The campaign and its core message, “Not Even Once,” speak directly to the highly addictive nature of Meth and graphically portray Meth's ravaging effects. Beginning today, the Illinois Meth Project advertising will reach roughly 70 to 90% of teens in the Champaign, Springfield, and Decatur areas, three to five times a week. The ads can be viewed at [www.illinoismethproject.org](http://www.illinoismethproject.org).

“We want to dramatically reduce Meth use and significantly increase the dialogue in the state,” said Meth Project founder Tom Siebel. “As an Illinois native, this project holds a special meaning for me. I am honored to be working with so many dedicated law enforcement officers, treatment experts, elected officials, and other state leaders who have taken a stand against Meth.”

The Illinois Meth Project is led by a distinguished panel of statewide leaders in business, government, law enforcement, and substance abuse treatment. The Advisory Council, chaired by Illinois attorney Michael Reagan, will play an active role in leading the Illinois Meth Project.

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The Advisory Council members include:

**Chairman:** Michael Reagan, *Partner, Herbolsheimer, Lannon, Henson, Duncan, & Reagan P.C.*

- **Tom Siebel**, *Founder, the Meth Project*
- **The Honorable Lisa Madigan**, *Illinois Attorney General*
- **The Honorable Jesse White**, *Illinois Secretary of State*
- **Louanner Peters**, *Deputy Governor, State of Illinois*
- **Wendy Bailie**, *Director of Substance Abuse Services, Franklin-Williamson Human Services*
- **Peter Bensinger**, *President and CEO, Bensinger, DuPont, & Associates*
- **Ron Gidwitz**, *Principal, GCG Partners; Chairman, Midwest Region, Boys and Girls Club of America*
- **Gail Koch**, *Director of Behavioral Health Services, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center*
- **John McCarter**, *President and CEO, The Field Museum*
- **Larry Trent**, *Director, Illinois State Police*
- **Sheriff Bill Wilson**, *President, Illinois Sheriffs' Association*

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) has also been instrumental in supporting federal funding efforts for the Project.

“Methamphetamine abuse is a critical law enforcement problem and a grave community problem in rural Illinois,” said Senator Durbin. “Today's launch marks the beginning of a vigorous and ardent effort to crush Meth's effect.”

The Illinois Meth Project also today announced the results of the *2007 Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions*. This first-ever Illinois survey examines the attitudes and behaviors that local teens have toward methamphetamine. The survey will serve as a benchmark to measure progress as the Illinois Meth Project executes its prevention campaign, educating the state's youth about the dangers of methamphetamine use.

### **About the Illinois Meth Project**

The Illinois Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in February 2008, the Illinois Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Illinois Meth Project is established by 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.illinoismethproject.org](http://www.illinoismethproject.org).

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<sup>i</sup> Professor J. Fred Giertz, University of Illinois. 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> Department of Justice. “DEA Fact Sheet: Illinois.” 2008.

<sup>iii</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy. Pushing Back Against Meth: A Progress Report on the Fight Against Methamphetamine in the United States. November 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2007. Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey. September 2007.

<sup>v</sup> Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. Methamphetamine in Montana: A Preliminary Report on Trends and Impact. January 2007.

<sup>vi</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy. Pushing Back Against Meth: A Progress Report on the Fight Against Methamphetamine in the United States. November 2006.