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**April is Alcohol and
STD Awareness
Month.**

**Ready to use PSA
now available:**

www.drugs.indiana.edu/hottopics/mattes/index.html

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ACROSS OUR DESKS TO YOURS

Methamphetamine presentation gives overview of drug

By Barbara Seitz de Martinez, Ph.D., Deputy Director of the IPRC

The following is a summary of Officer Scott Owens' presentation on methamphetamine, titled, "Clandestine Drug Laboratories: No Matter What You Call It ... It's Still Methamphetamine," delivered on March 8th, as part of the Afternoons R.O.C.K. in Indiana subcontractor meeting in Columbus, Indiana. Officer Owens is a Forensic Specialist with the Indiana State Police Crime Lab.

Methamphetamine: the Drug

Methamphetamine, a highly addictive stimulant also known as meth, crank, speed, crystal, glass and ice, causes a six to eight hour high (about 12-18 times longer than typical cocaine high). A gram, about six doses, costs an estimated \$25. In addition to meth produced in clandestine laboratories in Indiana, the drug is also brought into the state by distributors who carry it from sources in Mexico and the southwestern United States. Officer Owens explained in

the later question and answer section that although meth from Mexico is widely distributed in the U.S. and has been associated with Mexican drug trafficking gangs, very few Hispanics/Latinos are found to use meth, compared to Whites.

In the short-term, users experience euphoria, hyper-alertness, hyperactivity, loss of appetite, increased respiration, increased blood pressure, tremors and sometimes convulsions. Characteristics of long term use include dependence, weight loss, paranoia, hallucinations, mood disturbances, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's symptoms, stroke and/or heart attack.

Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratories

Police identify a clandestine meth lab based on three criteria:

- chemicals used to produce meth are present;

April Events

April 6

- "Binge Drinking and Youth—What Everyone Needs to Know" will be web cast on <http://www.health.org/multimedia/webcasts/w.aspx?ID=391>.

April 6-9

- Price World Drug Prevention Conference, the world's largest annual drug prevention conference, will meet in Cincinnati, Ohio. For more information, call 1-800-668-9277 or go to www.prideyouthprograms.org/PRIDE2005.html.

April 8

- Indianapolis will host "Unpacking Your Cultural Baggage," an InSOPHE spring meeting and workshop from 11 AM to 3 PM. Please register by April 1st. For more information, contact Cecilia at (317)241-6471 or go to <http://web.bs.u.edu/physiology/insophe>.

- The NALBOH's 6th Annual Ned. E. Baker Lecture in Public Health will meet from 1 to 2 PM Eastern time at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. For more information, contact nalboh@nalboh.org.

April 18-22

- The Grantsmanship Training Program will meet in Garret, Indiana. It is sponsored by GKB Community Head Start. For more information, go to <http://www.tgci.com/>.

April 28

- The Freedom Academy will hold a grant writing event from 9 AM to 4 PM IN Albion, Indiana. For more information, please contact <http://66.14.201.128/freedom/FAContacts.aspx>.

**For a complete list of events, visit:
www.drugs.indiana.edu**

ACROSS OUR DESKS TO YOURS

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- excessive amounts of these chemicals are found; and
- the apparent intent is to produce meth.

During 2004, 1549 clandestine meth labs were seized in Indiana, compared to 1260 and 988 in 2003 and 2002, respectively.

Hardware used in the labs ranges from simple plastic bottles, glass jars, hot plates, funnels, tubing and hoses, to high-tech laboratory glassware and compressed gas cylinders. There is no such thing as a "typical" lab operator: they range from the novice beginner to the organized large scale drug trafficker.

Chemicals Used to Make Methamphetamine

Meth is produced using a variety of chemicals, many highly hazardous, which are relatively inexpensive and available. Ephedrine or pseudoephedrine comprises the primary precursor and becomes part of the drug. Other chemicals, called reagents, are used to synthesize the drug but do not become part of it. Solvents are used to separate out the final product. Solvents and Hydrogen Chloride gas are employed to separate out the precursors and reagents from the produced drug.

Safety/Hazards

Persons near a clandestine lab run a high risk of inhaling, absorbing or ingesting corrosive and toxic chemicals. Lab operators frequently have weapons and booby-traps, even explosives, on-hand for self-defense or to destroy evidence of their activities. Given that meth causes paranoia and aggressive behavior, and the volatile nature of the chemicals present, this scenario constitutes an extremely dangerous circumstance for police and anyone else in the vicinity of the lab. In addition, biohazardous waste results from meth production.

Meth lab fires and explosions confirm the danger and have numbered 27 in 2002, 23 in 2003, and 18 in 2004.

Methamphetamine-affected Children

Unfortunately, an increasing number of children (over 600 since 2002) are being affected by the manufacture of methamphetamine in Indiana. Children can be affected in a number of ways. They may reside at the lab (e.g., in the house or apartment), or they may have happened to be present when the seizure occurred. In too many cases, children have suffered chemical exposure, injury, or even death. Since meth-addicted individuals lose interest in eating, their children may also suffer from nutritional as well as other forms of neglect.

Recognizing a Methamphetamine User

Use of methamphetamine takes a heavy toll on the human body. Addicted individuals cease to care about their physical appearance or hygiene. Users may be fidgety and exhibit hyperactivity or be paranoid, easily agitated or aggressive. Physical signs include dilated pupils, profuse sweating, and pale or discolored skin. They may be dirty, have skin sores, and have rotten or no teeth (from grinding their teeth during the drug high). Because loss of appetite is an affect of the drug, they may look gaunt and anorexic.

Prevention

For prevention, Officer Owens explained that anhydrous ammonia will soon routinely contain a dye that will turn everything it comes in contact with bright florescent pink. This will make it harder for would-be meth producers to steal the chemical from farms. Also, as it will be very hard to wash off and will be evident when skin is examined under ultraviolet light, it will be useful for identifying meth lab operators. Furthermore, the dye has the effect of slowing down the speed

Online Health Information Beneficial for Parents

For parents and educators dealing with the turmoil of teen years, finding a way to talk to adolescents about health issues can be hard. Sometimes literature can give the needed structure to spark conversation in this topic.

Sponsored by the Society for Adolescent Medicine and GlaxoSmithKline, the "Health Guide for America's Teens" pamphlet facilitates discussions on health-related issues by giving a well-rounded summary of health concerns affecting teenagers.

Covering subjects from relieving stress to drug abuse, the paragraphs inform the reader by giving information that is pertinent to teens. The language is simple and straight to the point and hard facts are given to support the ideas presented.

Readers are given ideas on how to communicate their feelings and manage stress and anger. Information and hard facts about drugs and alcohol is also available, with statistics given about the consequences of their use. The pamphlet is available online and ready to print at: www.adolescenthealth.org/Health_Guide_for_Americas_Teens.pdf.

Community Voices

Colleagues from across Indiana share news at:
www.drugs.indiana.edu/hottopics/community/index.html

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