

METHAMPHETAMINE IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Methamphetamine (meth) use in the State of California is seen as its top drug problem. It continues to be a concern in rural areas and is also the number one drug issue in San Francisco and other cities. Despite a drastic decrease in locally produced meth in California during recent years, new meth labs just south of the border in Mexico are increasing dramatically, creating new law enforcement dilemmas. Meth lab incidents in the State have decreased over the past four years, and treatment admissions have been growing steadily.

Meth Use Trends

- Young adults in California are using meth at a rate that exceeds the national estimate. Data from 2002 through 2005 indicate that more than two percent (2.48%) of residents between the ages of 18 and 25 reported past year meth abuse, compared with a national estimate of 1.6 percent.¹
- Meth rates in California across all ages exceed the national estimate, according to data from 2002 through 2005. More than 1 percent (1.13%) of California residents 12 and older reported past year meth abuse. Nationally, only 0.6 percent of those 12 and older abused meth.²
- California treatment admissions for meth as the primary drug have increased dramatically. Between 1995 and 2005, meth treatment admissions for California residents 12 and older increased 129 percent, from 28,505 admissions in 1995 to 65,204 admissions in 2005.³
- Meth production in California has decreased dramatically over the past five years. The number of meth lab incidents in California decreased 80 percent, from 1,744 in 2002 to 353 in 2006. However, during the same time period, authorities witnessed an increase in Mexican meth labs.⁴
- California has fewer restrictions on meth precursor ingredient sales in retail outlets than other states enacted in 2005. California law includes the following: No retailer may sell in a single transaction more than three packages or nine grams of a product containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, norpseudoephedrine or phenylpropanolamine. Pediatric liquid products containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, norpseudoephedrine or phenylpropanolamine are exempt from the three package or nine gram sales limit.⁵

¹ National Survey on Drug Use and Health, SAMHSA, State Estimates of Past Year Methamphetamine Use, 2002-2005. URL: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/stateMeth/stateMeth.htm>

² Ibid.

³ Treatment Episode Data Set, SAMHSA, California State Estimates, 1995-2005. URL: <http://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/teds05/tedsad2k5web.pdf>

⁴ DEA, California State Fact Sheet, 2006. URL: <http://www.dea.gov/pubs/states/california.html>

⁵ National Association of Chain Drug Stores, Methamphetamine Precursor Laws: Restricting the Sales of Pseudoephedrine, Ephedrine, and Phenylpropanolamine Products, California. URL: http://www.nacds.org/user-assets/PDF_files/California.pdf
