

Methamphetamine (Initiative by Senator Jackie Speier)

CSAM Position: No position; bill not written

THE PROBLEM - Production, distribution, and use have changed:

- A. Use is spreading into new populations across the country
 - 500,000 users in CA, evenly split between men and women
 - High use among rural populations and men who have sex with men
- B. Smokeable forms lead to increased brain damage among users
 - Length of use is related to severity of brain damage and verbal/visual memory and learning deficits and may last months, or years
- C. The disease of addiction is compounded by prolonged brain recovery
 - "Methamphetamine-related drug disorders are associated with persistent changes in the brain that are accompanied by... cognitive impairment...."
- D. Meth addicts are flooding the judicial and medical system
 - 5-fold increase in drug treatment admissions for meth in last decade
 - 17% of counties surveys report that >1/2 of jail populations are due to meth-related crimes
- E. Meth labs are polluting the environment
 - Meth labs seized increased by 590% from '94-2000
 - Environmental cost to CA in 2001 was \$5.5 million
- F. The children of methamphetamine users are often suffering neglect
 - 30% of child protection assessments involve meth use by a family member
 - 221 children were involved in meth lab incidents in CA (2004) and 60% tested positive for meth

THE SOLUTION - Treatment works, and drug availability can be reduced:

- A. Treatment Works
 - "There is absolutely no evidence that MA clients respond differently than cocaine clients to psychosocial treatments...."
 - 55-59% of meth users completing treatment were MA-free 12 months after discharge
- B. Treatment must be throughout the prolonged recovery process
 - The length of time in treatment is a reliable predictor of post-treatment outcome and recidivism
- C. Must be consistent with the medical management of a chronic illness
 - "Like other chronic illnesses, the effects of drug dependence treatment are optimized when patients remain in continuing care and monitoring...."
- D. Must be integrated with Judicial system
 - "Judges should coerce treatment until sobriety becomes tolerable."
 - Treatment while incarcerated, plus aftercare, cut recidivism over 50%
 - 11% of Drug Court graduates are re-arrested; while 80% of Drug Court non-completers are re-arrested.
 - 2/3 of drug court participants complete treatment
- E. Pseudoephedrine and ephedrine precursors must be better controlled

THE BENEFIT - Treatment produces:

- A. Crime Deterrence
 - Sustained abstinence reduces crime by 40-75%
 - 74% decrease in crime among those receiving treatment
- B. Economics
 - Every dollar spent on drug treatment generates \$7 in monetary savings for society
- C. Increased Abstinence, and thus Demand Reduction
 - 50% of those treated continue abstinence for 3-5 years

THE FUTURE - A New Model for Meeting the Meth Challenge:

Because methamphetamine addiction is a medical problem that has significant social impacts, California's approach to this challenge must blend Public Health and Public Safety perspectives – treatment and monitoring – as exemplified by the therapeutic jurisprudence model guiding our Drug Courts. CSAM is committed to bringing about a future in which this level of treatment becomes available to all who need recovery.