

The Meth Challenge:

Targeting Rural Indiana's Most Dangerous Drug

SIRDP 2005 Fall Symposium

Contact Information for Speakers and Presenters

Morning Presentation on Scope

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Morning Panel on Impacts

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SIRDP Annual Fall Symposium
The Meth Challenge Summary

November 9, 2005

Welcome

Thayr Richey of SIRDP welcomed everyone to "The Meth Challenge: Targeting Rural Indiana's Most Dangerous Drug." The conference represented SIRDP's continuing commitment to working on common problems facing rural Indiana

communities. The conference was co-presented by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI), and sponsored by Hoosier Energy.

Jim Norris, the City of Columbus Public Safety Director, welcomed everyone to Columbus. Setting the tone for

the conference, Norris explained that methamphetamines first appeared in Columbus in 1994 and had become the primary drug found in the community by 2004. To emphasize his point, Norris brought in that day's local newspaper which featured two stories about meth.

Next, Scott Burgins of SIRDP introduced the day's activities. The morning presentation and panel discussion would address the impacts of methamphetamines on rural communities, and the afternoon session would focus on strategies and solutions.

Scope of Meth Problem in Rural Indiana

To examine the scope of the meth problem in rural Indiana, Sgt. Paul Andry of the Indiana State Police Clandestine Lab Team chronicled the development of meth use in the state. Meth first

appeared in the 1800s and was given to soldiers in WWII by both the Allied and Axis forces. During the 1960s biker gangs in the U.S. devised two different methods of meth production. According to Andry, meth users today frequently fall into the 25-40 age group and are usually Caucasian with low-moderate income levels.



Morning Presentation

Meth has many names among users. Some of the more common monikers are crank, speed, and crystal. Andry estimated that a gram of meth costs approximately \$80-\$100, and a gram can yield roughly 60 doses depending on the user. Meth can be injected, ingested, smoked, and snorted. Andry said that one of the most common ways people use meth is

huffing it through hollowed-out ink pens.

Andry explained that meth acts in much the same way as cocaine, but the effect lasts longer and produces more severe damage to the body. According to Andry, meth users often become paranoid and exhibit violent and aggressive behavior. Addiction time frames vary but generally occur over a matter of months. Side effects of the drug are often physical, mental, and psychological.

Andry emphasized that meth use, especially in rural communities, produces a high cost to society. Nearly all facets of community life become burdened when meth use is prevalent. Andry stressed that meth users need alternatives to jail such as treatment.

Impact of Meth in Rural Indiana

After Sgt. Andry's presentation, Scott Burgins introduced the six panelists to discuss the varied impacts of meth in rural Indiana.

Dan Murrie, Daviess County Chief Deputy Prosecutor, described how meth use burdens the judicial system. Murrie witnessed a drastic increase in the number of cases filed in Daviess County within recent years. In a county of approximately 30,000 people, 1 in 27 are on some kind of probation. In looking at probation for felony offenses, Murrie said there were 28 people on felony probation in 1995; ten years later (2005) 294 people are on felony probation. That amounts to 1 in 73 adults in Daviess County.

Ruth Alewine, Region 14 Manager of the Department of Child Services and Division of Family Resources, said there was no single impact of meth use but that there are several related impacts. In general, the workload among Family Case Managers has increased tremendously in child protective services. Many children of meth users have to be placed in foster care or in group homes. Alewine also noted that addressing staff safety issues has become essential before they make visits to meth homes. The Department of Child Services in concert with many other entities in the State that work with safety and children's issues has devised the "Drug Endangered Child" protocol to help Family Case Managers evaluate the needs of children found in homes where meth is used or produced. They determine the health

and safety needs of the children including need for decontamination.

Next, Dr. Gail Deboy of Purdue University talked about the human and financial impacts of meth on agriculture. Deboy said farmers face costly repairs from thieves stealing anhydrous ammonia. In addition, the costs associated with cleaning up meth labs are often more than farmers can afford. Some farmers fear that anhydrous ammonia will be outlawed, forcing them to adopt costly alternatives. Adding to their financial concerns, farmers increasingly fear that their children will begin using meth. In conclusion, Deboy said that farmers should attend training sessions on the dangers of anhydrous ammonia.

Tom Cox, Executive Director of Amethyst House, offered a perspective on the treatment of addiction as it relates to meth. According to Cox, meth is fifth on the list of Division of Mental Health funded programs and fourth on the Department of Corrections' services list. Cox stressed that the needs of local communities are not translating into state level funding streams. He advised communities to consider addiction, not just meth, the problem and treatment as a possible solution.

Jennifer Staab, Healthy Schools Coordinator of the Monroe County Community Schools Corporation, said that school systems frequently see alcohol as the drug with the greatest impact. According to Staab, teens who use meth have often already dropped out of school. When school systems think about meth, they tend to



From left to right: Dr. Gale Deboy and Dan Murrie



From left to right: Scott Burgins, Greg Wathen, Jennifer Staab, and Ruth Alewine

view parent use as the main problem. In many cases, parents who use meth neglect to care for their children, who may later begin using meth themselves. For Staab, the challenge is connecting with kids to keep them in school before they use drugs.

Greg Wathen, Executive Director of the Perry County Development Corporation, was the final panelist of the morning session. He said the total cost to communities is difficult to measure. According to Wathen, one Perry County business calculated it spends between \$200,000 and \$250,000 each year dealing with drugs and employees. Employers also experience higher numbers of absenteeism due to methamphetamine use. A small business owner himself, Wathen stressed that the prevalence of meth abuse leads to higher costs of goods and services that are passed on to all community members.

After the panel discussion, Scott Burgins invited the attendees to ask questions.

Question: Have you seen an increase in health problems of jail inmates due to meth?

Murrie: We see it indirectly.

Cox: It costs more to treat a meth addict. Treating meth requires more staff time, which costs more.

Question: Are sexually transmitted infections on the rise due to meth?

Murrie: We have seen more cases of Hepatitis C.

Alewine: In general, there's been an increase in HIV and AIDS cases.

Question: Can meth users be rehabilitated? Is there funding available for rehabilitation?

Cox: Yes, they can be rehabilitated but there is not much funding. State and federal government funding is directed toward enforcement, but that is only half of the problem.

Wathen: I've seen employers incorporate rehabilitation in health benefit packages. A downside is that employees caught using onsite are immediately terminated. Part of the problem

in the workplace is that by the time employers find out there's a problem, it's probably too late. Some businesses have not assessed the actual costs of meth addictions.

Question: What are the long-term nervous system effects of using methamphetamines? Are they permanent?

Cox: Some can be permanent, but there are a variety of effects. Each case is different. As with all addiction treatment measures, relapse is part of the problem.

Question: How are pregnant women on meth treated in the court system?

Murrie: This problem is unfortunately more common than people think. In Daviess County, we try to come up with creative sentences for such people. We don't want kids in jail because of the liability.

Cox: Pregnant women have priority with treatment services.

Question: Are there specific drug prevention programs for schools?

Staab: I'm not aware of what other schools are doing. We do not have a specific meth curriculum in Monroe County schools.

Question: Is it true that farmers are not

“The needs of local communities are not translating into state and federal level funding streams.”

**– Tom Cox,
Amethyst House**



From left to right: Scott Burgins, Greg Wathen, and Tom Cox



Lunch Presentation

locking up tanks of ammonia due to the costs?

Deboy: Most anhydrous tanks do not have locks on them in this state.

Question: Is there a dye to use in the ammonia as a preventative measure?

Deboy: I'm not familiar with anyplace in Indiana using a dye such as GloTel. It only costs about a \$1 per acre to use the dye, which will show up 3-7 days in ultraviolet light. The dye also makes the meth undesirable that was made with ammonia.

Andry: There is isolated use of the dye in Indiana. It has proven to be a fairly effective deterrent. Now we're seeing users making their own anhydrous ammonia.

Question: Do you provide training to your staff before they go on house visits?

Alewine: Yes, the state provides training. Each county has a child protection agency, and many of those link up with local law enforcement to work on the cases associated with meth.

Question: What types of penalties exist for meth users? Why are they able to get out and reoffend?

Murrie: Bonding out is non negotiable, but most people are not able to bond out. If a defendant can make bond, then there isn't much we can do. We do fight for very high bonds with reoffenders. If people are offending in multiple counties, then each county may have different sentences. Contact your local legislators and state senators

if you are looking for consistency throughout the state for these offenders.

Question: What would we find in meth homes? What are things to look for?

Andry: Foils, ink pens, tubes, white powder substances, pipes, baggies, etc.

Question: Are judges educated about meth?

Murrie: I think judges know what's going on.

Question: How are new policies on pseudoephedrine helping?

Murrie: According to the most recent statistics, the number of lab seizures has reduced. There's some false hope in the stats, because the number of users is not reducing.

Question: Are pharmacies sharing information and records through a database?

Murrie: The Prosecutor's Office receives the lists from pharmacies. Law enforcement agencies have a right to look at the data.

Andry: Right now it's only hard copy monitoring. There's been a positive effect in that the number of labs found is dropping. We don't know how long that trend will last. There's been some cooperation between pharmacies within the same chain. Electronic monitoring is still the goal.

Strategies for Combating Meth in Rural Indiana



Jennifer Hillen, Moms Off Meth

Following lunch, the afternoon session focused on various presentations of local initiatives to combat meth use at the community level.

Moms Off Meth (M.O.M)

Judy Lifferth and Jennifer Hillen shared their story of starting a Moms Off Meth support group in Bartholomew County.

After a meth-related arrest in January 2005, Hillen said she was determined to find a way to stay clean. Hillen explained that guilt and depression often lead people back to meth addiction. With the help of Judy Lifferth, Hillen was able to launch her own Moms Off Meth program based on a successful support group in Iowa.

Hillen and Lifferth devised a 12-week course that focused on education, treatment, and support. They also brought in experts to speak with the group about that nature of addiction and the effects of meth on the body, family, and community. The group also focused on self-esteem building. At the end of the 12 weeks, the women are given certificates to help motivate them to stay clean.

“We want women to feel safe and loved and to help them develop the qualities of self esteem, courage and responsibility, thereby helping them make positive choices.”

– Judy Lifferth, M.O.M

Recovering meth addicts need to know what community resources are available to them and what real, positive friendships are. Hillen stressed that a support system is essential.

Lifferth said that the program works best because it’s gender-specific and meth-specific. The shared experience element also plays a role in the programs’ success. For Hillen, education is the key to beating addiction and making positive life choices.

New Moms Off Meth groups are currently starting in Greensburg and Jennings County.

In addition, men in Bartholomew County are launching a new program Dads Against Drugs (D.A.D.) Hillen and Lifferth encourage families to attend the meetings to understand the addict’s perspective.

As a capstone to their presentation, Hillen and Lifferth premiered their new documentary about their Moms Off Meth program. They will be selling copies of the video to fund the costs of making it. Contact Judy Lifferth for more information.

Knox County Sheriff’s Department

Next, Sheriff Steve Luce of the Knox County



Sheriff Steve Luce, Knox County Sheriff’s Department

Sheriff’s Department discussed his county’s initiative to combat meth use. When Luce was elected Sheriff in 2003, he launched the “Meth Triangle” program to work on three levels in the community: enforcement, education, and treatment. But Luce made it clear that community support is essential in any effort to combat meth, saying, “Law enforcement can’t make changes without the community. The community has to be a part of the solution.”

Luce’s enforcement component consisted of a 70 percent increase in patrols, higher standards among the sheriff’s reserve department, and an innovative partnership with local farmers. Many

of the new Knox County reserve deputies are small business owners who feel they have a stake in being part of the effort to combat meth. To gain support from the farming community the Sheriff's Department sponsors hog roasts where law enforcement can have direct communication with the farmers. The deputies saturate parts of the county during their Random Increase Patrols Program (RIPP). The sheriff's office also distributes signs to area farmers saying their property is frequently patrolled by officers. In addition, Knox County created a mounted horse patrol unit that has located several labs. Luce requires all officers to be trained in ways to communicate with drug users. The newly created Intense Criminal Enforcement (ICE) program features officers specially trained in investigation. To round out their increased enforcement agenda, Knox County initiated a canine program.

Luce pointed out that enforcement is only one part of the solution. To educate the community, Luce asked schools to talk to fifth- and sixth-grade students about the dangers of meth. A county-wide inmate work program also gives presentations to schools and groups.



Dr. Thayr Richey, Southern Indiana Rural Development Project

“Law enforcement cannot make changes without the community. The community has to be a part of the solution.”

**– Sheriff Steve Luce,
Knox County Sheriff's
Department**

Luce said that a big part of the solution is changing the perception that many people have about the typical “meth addict.” Knox County hosts a Community Meth Awareness Meeting every other month in an effort to educate the community. Luce made a rule that all meth related initiatives must have mandatory press releases, because he considers education an essential ingredient for making community changes.

The last component of the “Meth Triangle” program is treatment. Luce said that communities need to provide treatment opportunities and resources for people trying to recover from meth addiction. Life After Meth is a local faith-based organization that helps people deal with addiction. The faith-based programs in Knox County also provide shelter for recovering addicts; they can house 10 males and 5 females in their two shelter facilities. Local churches take turns providing three hours of programming about meth every Monday night. To help them with reentry into society, Luce started a program for inmates to help them learn life skills and gain access to continuing education.

M.A.I.N. Team

Next Beth Davis talked briefly about the M.A.I.N. Team of Daviess County. Davis explained that M.A.I.N. stands for Meth Awareness Is Necessary. Their group is divided into four squads: education, resources, recovery, and reentry. Davis said that these are the four key elements in combating meth addiction.

Davis said that it is vitally important that community members understand that meth is everyone's problem. The education squad organizes forums to talk with youth groups and clubs about the dangers of meth. The resources and recovery squads research various recovery options and communicate with the media about community resources. Davis said the M.A.I.N. Team tries to help recovering meth addicts with reentry into society.

The group meets once a month. Davis said the M.A.I.N. Team meetings are divided into three parts: each squad gives a short discussion of their programs, then they break into squads to plan more programs, and the meeting concludes with a meth education moment. The group tries to collaborate with local enforcement, the Purdue Extension office, faith and secular groups.

Greene County United Against Meth (G.U.A.M.)

Nancy Cummings represented the group Greene County United Against Meth (G.U.A.M.). Cummings said that self education is important. G.U.A.M. developed an action plan and applied for a local mini grant. Even with a small budget, G.U.A.M. has been able to sponsor informational seminars for elementary school staff, community panel discussions, and an awareness day called Mad About Meth Day.

Cummings said that G.U.A.M. targeted their programming to reach professionals who work with families and children.

With guidance from G.U.A.M., the state sent meth awareness kits to enforcement agencies and businesses in Greene

County. The group also organized a county-wide poster contest to get information about meth into the school system. G.U.A.M.'s programming efforts have yielded tips and other positive outcomes.

G.U.A.M. developed a Meth Manual that includes safety tips and questions to ask children among other information. They sent

the manual to schools, social service agencies and law enforcement agencies. Cummings said that educating legislators is also important. She encouraged people to start a group like G.U.A.M., explaining that a small committed group of volunteers is more important than money. According to Cummings, "If there's a passion and a commitment, you can make a difference in your community."

War in Harrison County Against Meth (WHAM)

Finally, Steve Gilliland of the recently formed Harrison County Meth Coalition talked about the effort in his community. Gilliland explained that the Harrison County Meth Coalition received a 4community Grant through the

Indiana Association of United Ways funded by the Lilly Endowment. The grant provided \$83,000 which was matched by \$55,500 from local sources. These funds will allow the coalition to launch a two-year campaign focused on community awareness.

“Even without a lot of money, if there’s a passion and a commitment, you can make a difference in your community.”
– Nancy Cummings, Greene County United Against Meth (G.U.A.M.)



From left to right: Steve Gilliland, Beth Davis, and Nancy Cummings

Although the group is just starting, Gilliland said that they have begun educating healthcare providers about meth and the Drug Endangered Children

protocol. Sixty area volunteers have established five committees and begin meeting this month. Initial efforts also include recruiting local churches to volunteer to be "on-call" to provide supply kits within 24 hours to children removed from meth homes. Grant funds have allowed the group to hire a part-time coordinator, Debbie Heazlitt, who can be reached at debbieheazlitt4@hotmail.com for more information on the Harrison County project.

Press Release

SUBJECT: SIRDP Conference Targets Community Meth Issues
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Communities can make a difference in the fight against meth when a range of organizations and individuals pull together for a common goal. That was the message sent at a statewide conference on the methamphetamine crisis in rural Indiana.

A recap of “The Meth Challenge: Targeting Rural Indiana’s Most Dangerous Drug”, complete with summaries of several successful community meth programs and speaker contact information can be found at <http://www.sirdp.us/news> .

The conference, which was hosted by the Southern Indiana Rural Development Project (SIRDP) and the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) with support by Hoosier Energy REC, was attended by nearly 200 people. Experts in the fields of law enforcement, treatment, prevention, education, local government and agriculture were assembled to offer insights into the meth problem.

Attendees learned the scope of the meth problem from Sgt. Paul Andry of the Indiana State Police and meth’s impacts from a panel of experts. The main focus of the conference, however, was placed on community strategies to combat meth.

Sheriff Steve Luce of the Knox County Sheriff’s Department was one speaker who emphasized the need for a true community response to meth. Led by the Sheriff’s Department, Knox County has implemented a broad range of successful meth programs.

“Law enforcement cannot make changes without the community,” said Sheriff Luce. “The community has to be a part of the solution.”

Also in the spotlight were county-wide meth coalitions. Representatives from coalitions in Daviess, Greene and Harrison counties offered their insights into how groups of concerned citizens or human service providers can address meth in their community, often on a shoestring budget.

“Even without a lot of money, if there is a passion and a commitment, you can make a difference in your community,” stated Nancy Cummings of Greene County United Against Meth (G.U.A.M.).

Perhaps the most moving presentation of the afternoon was given by the Moms Off Meth (M.O.M.) support group. M.O.M., with chapters in Columbus, Seymour and other Southern Indiana communities, offers support to mothers who are trying to recover from meth addictions.

“We want women to feel safe and loved so they have the courage and self esteem to make positive choices,” said Judy Lifferth of M.O.M.