

Meth Myths Are Still Out There

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1998



2002

There is a pandemic sweeping America. No, I'm not talking about the Bird Flu, though it may well haunt us in the future. It is the rampant production and use of methamphetamine, better known as meth. Chances are, you have worked a few meth cases, have run into a few "tweakers" on your beat, or have seen the disturbing behavior of a meth addict in prison.

We've been making great strides in our efforts to battle this drug epidemic. Placing Sudafed and other items containing precursors behind the counter has been incredibly effective. However, misperceptions about precursor legislation and meth overall have led to a prevalence of myths regarding this dangerous drug. The following are three very important myths which must be dispelled in order to truly advance the fight against methamphetamine.

Myth #1: Meth usage has decreased since the passage of precursor legislation

In order to fully dispel this myth, it is important to establish a baseline of knowledge. Precursor legislation restricts the sale of items which can be used to make meth. These include pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in cold medicines such as Sudafed; anhydrous ammonia, a common fertilizer similar to that which was used on the Oklahoma City bombings; and red phosphorous, which is found on the ignitable tips of matches.

In 2004, Oklahoma was the first state to pass precursor legislation. Since then, nearly every state has followed suit. The laws have been incredibly effective in curbing the occurrence of illicit meth labs. In 2004, there were 659 meth labs discovered in Oklahoma. In 2005, that number dropped to 217. Precursor legislation is largely responsible for this drastic reduction. While this is very good news, many public officials are taking this as a sign that the meth problem is a thing of the past. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Within our borders exists a large community of meth addicts and users. The domestic supply of meth has been diminished by these laws. Does this eliminate the demand? Hardly. Rather, demand is being met by another supplier. Meth is coming in through Canada, Mexico, and East Asia at record-breaking speeds. Gangs such as Mala Salvatrucha (MS-13) have quickly moved in to replace the old "Mom and Pop" labs as primary suppliers. **Jackie Long**, Special Agent in Charge for the California Department of Justice Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Program, notes that while meth indigenous to the U.S. is becoming scarce, meth and meth ingredients are seeping across the borders every day. Meth usage continues to rise as the drug gains popularity further and further east.

Myth #2: Meth addicts are more difficult to reform than addicts of other substances

Judging by TV specials, American jails are filled with meth addicts whose crimes were caused by an addiction from which they will never recover. While it is true that there are many meth users in jail, meth is not even close to being the most abused drug.

Nationally, meth was the drug of choice for only seven percent of people who sought treatment in 2003, according to a federal database published by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

According to **Richard A. Rawson** of the UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs, meth addicts exhibit similar recovery patterns to those with cocaine addictions.

According to **Kermit Dahlen**, of Jackson Recovery Centers in Iowa, meth addicts actually have a better chance of recovery than addicts of other substances. Officials at Jackson Recovery Centers say that 82 percent of meth addicts who complete full treatment programs remain sober after six months.

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Top Ten Caddy Comments

Golfer: "Think I'm going to drown myself in the lake."

Caddy: "Think you can keep your head down that long?"

Golfer: "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddy: "Try heaven, you've already moved most of the earth."

Golfer: "Do you think my game is improving?"

Caddy: "Yes sir, you miss the ball much closer now."

Golfer: "Do you think I can get there with a 5 iron?"

Caddy: "Eventually."

Golfer: "You've got to be the worst caddy in the world."

Caddy: "I don't think so sir. That would be too much of a coincidence."

Golfer: "Please stop checking your watch all the time. It's too much of a distraction."

Caddy: "It's not a watch—it's a compass."

Golfer: "How do you like my game?"

Caddy: "Very good sir, but personally, I prefer golf."

Golfer: "Do you think it's a sin to play on Sunday?"

Caddy: "The way you play, sir, it's a sin on any day."

Golfer: "This is the worst course I've ever played on."

Caddy: "This isn't the golf course. We left that an hour ago."

Golfer: "That can't be my ball, it's too old."



Caddy: "It's been a long time since we teed off, sir."

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