

# MONTANA METH PROJECT®

## **Economic Study Estimates Meth Abuse Costs the U.S. \$23.4 Billion**

**Missoula, Montana—February 4, 2009—** A RAND Corporation study released today, “The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States,” estimates the national cost of Meth use is \$23.4 billion. The study represents the first time that a comprehensive assessment of the annual costs of methamphetamine abuse has been analyzed on a national scale.

The RAND study found that methamphetamine use imposes a significant and disproportionate burden on both individuals and society in money spent on treatment, healthcare, foster care services, as well as the costs of crime and lost productivity associated with the drug.

According to the RAND study, law enforcement and the criminal justice system bear one of the most significant financial burdens, making up more than 15%—\$4 billion—of the total amount of costs associated with Meth abuse each year. Meth-related crime in Montana increased by 21% from 2004 to 2005, but as a result of statewide prevention and interdiction programs, the rate dropped by 62% from 2005 to 2008, according to the Montana Board of Crime Control.<sup>1</sup> Despite this significant downward trend in crime, incarceration of adult inmates due to Meth-related crimes still represents enormous cost to the state.

“Methamphetamine abuse not only destroys families, it also places a tremendous burden on law enforcement in Montana,” said Attorney General Steve Bullock. “With the help of the Montana Meth Project, we’ve come a long way in reducing Meth use in our state. It’s important that we continue to reach out to the next generation and educate our kids about the devastating consequences of drug abuse.”

“Our goal in sponsoring this study was to provide a definitive economic cost estimate of the Meth problem that legislators and regulators can consider while establishing social priorities,” said Tom Siebel, founder and chairman of the Meth Project. “This appears to be a preventable problem. The staggering economic and human costs of Meth use can be avoided.”

“I’ve seen the price tag that Meth addiction brings in terms of both human suffering and dollars. I’m proud to be on the front line of this fight with the Meth Project in Montana to eradicate this drug completely,” said Congressman Denny Rehberg, a member of the House Appropriations Committee. “Our work on many fronts, both private and public, has resulted in dramatic reductions in crime, social service costs, and use.”

“Meth is a scourge in Montana and across the country. It ruins lives—tears apart families and friends. It devastates communities. That’s why stamping out Meth in Montana and across the country is one of my top priorities,” said Montana’s senior U.S. Senator Max Baucus. “This study reinforces what many of us know—that Meth takes an economic toll as well. That’s why I fought so hard to include Montana in Rocky Mountain HIDTA and fight year after year for funding to help with prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. I’ll continue to work together with Senator Jon Tester and my other colleagues to secure funding to help stamp out Meth once and for all.”

“I support all efforts to decrease Meth use in Montana,” said U.S. Senator Jon Tester. “Drug abuse hurts our families, state and communities. “In these tough economic times, we cannot let fighting drug abuse fall from the radar.”

Prior to the Montana Meth Project’s launch in 2005, Montana ranked #5 in the nation for Meth abuse and Meth-related crime was on the rise. Since the Project’s advertisements have been running on Montana’s

airwaves for three years, educating teens about the dangers of Meth, the state has seen a 62% decrease in Meth-related crimes, teen Meth use has declined by 45%, and adult Meth use is down by 72%.<sup>ii</sup>

The Montana Meth Project's proven prevention model has been replicated in several states throughout the nation facing severe Meth problems, including Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, and Illinois.

To view the full results of the RAND study, please visit [www.methproject.org](http://www.methproject.org).

### **About the Montana Meth Project**

Launched in September 2005, the Montana Meth Project—a not-for-profit organization headquartered in Missoula, Montana—implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Combining extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign, it has been repeatedly cited as an effective response to a devastating social problem. For more information, visit [www.montanameth.org](http://www.montanameth.org).

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Media Contacts: Peg Shea  
Montana Meth Project  
(406) 721-2538  
[info@montanameth.org](mailto:info@montanameth.org)

Stephanie Simon  
Weber Shandwick  
(312) 988-2081  
[ssimon@webershandwick.com](mailto:ssimon@webershandwick.com)

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<sup>i</sup> Montana Department of Justice, Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-up Report on Trends and Progress, April 2008

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.