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## Meth outreach deserves support

"Harmful to your health" warnings, while still part of the public-health weaponry in fighting drug abuse, now pale in comparison to another approach, at least where the audience is a group of teenagers.

That approach is the in-your-face imagery the Meth Project uses in its video advertisements. Many people have seen the disturbing visuals on crystal methamphetamine effects. One shows a hooded boy shaking down terrified people in a laundromat for drug money; another shows a girl confronting her future self cowering on the bottom of a bathtub, her face cracked and bleeding.

"Not Even Once" is the slogan in this aggressive campaign, which aims to correct the adolescent notion that drug use is in any way attractive. Pioneered by the project's founders in Montana, it has shown impressive results in reversing increases in first-time use. Now an Isle branch of the project is working to replicate those results here.

Methamphetamine (ice) use has been a scourge in the Islands, and while outreach has brought more people into treatment in recent years, Hawaii is far from declaring victory: A 2007 study ranked the state fifth nationally for its rate of meth use among people age 12 and up.

This year, the meth project survey of more than 1,000 teens in Hawaii showed one of three believed that trying the drug posed little or no risk, and that it would help them lose weight. One in four thought it would give them more energy.

Those are dangerous attitudes, and today lawmakers will discuss the project's plans to change young minds by raising funds for outreach and enlisting peer volunteers. As a community, Hawaii should offer its support to see that they succeed.

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