

For Immediate Release

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

Honolulu, Hawaii—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 (“ice”) in one year alone is \$23.4 billion. The study represents the first time that a comprehensive assessment of the costs of methamphetamine abuse have been analyzed on a national scale. Based on the RAND research model estimates and current use rates in Hawaii, Meth could cost the state of Hawaii \$500 million each year in treatment, healthcare, and foster care services, as well as the costs of crime and lost productivity associated with the drug.

States with significant methamphetamine problems experience higher levels of property and violent crimes and tend to spend more on healthcare and social services than states with low levels of Meth use. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that Meth is Hawaii’s largest contributor to violence and property crime. The state ranks #3 in the nation for methamphetamine treatment admissions, #4 for Meth-related drug offenses, and #9 for Meth use in people ages 12 and over.^{i, ii, iii}

“Methamphetamine destroys families and communities. This study begins to quantify the economic cost of Meth, but the human costs are immeasurable,” said Hawaii State House Speaker, Calvin Say. “Without coordinated prevention efforts, the young people of Hawaii are at risk of experimentation with Meth, setting themselves up for a lifetime of addiction and destitution. If we do not get control of this dangerous drug, we risk losing a generation to Meth.”

According to the RAND study, healthcare costs for Meth total at least \$712 million in a single year. In 2006, Meth-related emergency room visits in Hawaii cost \$43 million and 66% of this cost was borne by Hawaii’s taxpayers.^{iv} In order to address the economic and public health consequences of Meth abuse, leaders across Hawaii have been working to combat methamphetamine through enforcement, treatment, and prevention/education efforts.

“Hawaii ranks among the top 10 states in the nation for Meth abuse and our young people are particularly vulnerable,” said Hawaii State Senate President, Colleen Hanabusa. “We must remain focused on addressing what continues to be one of the most critical issues plaguing our communities through proven, aggressive prevention programs.”

To view the full results of the RAND study, please visit www.methproject.org.

About the Meth Project

The Meth Project is a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. The Montana Meth Project, Arizona Meth Project, Idaho Meth Project, Illinois Meth Project, Wyoming Meth Project, and other state affiliates implement the Meth Project prevention programs in their respective states. The Meth Project is a project of the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation. For more information, visit www.methproject.org.

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ⁱ SAMHSA, Treatment Episode Data Set, 2006

ⁱⁱ Department of Justice. “Hawaii: High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, Drug Market Analysis.” 2008

ⁱⁱⁱ SAMHSA, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007

^{iv} Hawaii – HHIC Online Reports, Inpatient Database and ED Database, <http://hhic.org/meth.asp>