

AG Schimel: Joins pharmacists, grocers, retailers and manufacturers to announce anti-smurfing campaign

Posted on Tuesday, Jul 31, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Attorney General Brad Schimel, retailers, and pharmacists join to educate community on illegal “smurfing” and its consequences

GREEN BAY, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel, along with representatives from Wisconsin Grocers Association, Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers, Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers, and Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), today announced the launch of Wisconsin’s anti-smurfing campaign at events in Green Bay and Wausau. The educational campaign will increase public awareness about the criminal enterprise known as “smurfing,” which refers to the purchase of over-the-counter (OTC) cold or allergy medicines containing pseudoephedrine (PSE) for criminals who seek to manufacture methamphetamine with this ingredient.

The announcement comes shortly after the state implemented legislation passed last session that requires all PSE purchases to be entered into the National Precursor Log Exchange, or NPLeX, system. NPLeX is a multi-state, electronic data base that allows real-time blocking of PSE purchases. Illegal sales are flagged and immediately blocked and law enforcement can use the data to track meth operations.

“Meth use and production is threatening our state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “With the ongoing *KNOW Meth* public awareness campaign, Wisconsin’s elected officials, health care professionals, and law enforcement community are working hard to prevent meth use, and we’re excited to work with the state’s retailers, grocers, pharmacists, and medicine manufacturers to inform Wisconsinites that the

purchase of PSE for anyone who intends to use it to make meth is a serious offense and one that could get you arrested and prosecuted.”

This initiative will serve as part of the [KNOW Meth](#) public awareness campaign, launched earlier this year by Attorney General Schimel, the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and the Northwoods Coalition to fight meth use all across the state. The anti-smurfing campaign is an additional educational effort seeking to inform consumers of the serious risks and legal consequences of smurfing, in addition to its role in the illegal methamphetamine production process. The effort will include starkly worded posters that point out the consequences of buying medicine that will be used for meth production. The program is based on extensive research and message testing, and has already been adopted in several other states.

The Wisconsin Grocers Association, Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, and Alliance of Wisconsin Retailers are teaming up with CHPA to distribute the posters that will be displayed across Wisconsin in locations that sell OTC medicines.

“Through this campaign, consumers will come face-to-face with the reality of smurfing’s impact, and the consequences it holds,” said Brandon Scholz, president of the Wisconsin Grocers Association. “The people of Wisconsin are coming together to fight the meth, and as retailers, we’re proud to be a part of that effort with our participation in the anti-smurfing campaign.”

“Pharmacists stand at the forefront of our state’s battle against meth production, especially since the introduction of NPLeX, and we understand the important role we serve as healthcare providers in Wisconsin communities,” said Danielle Womack, director of Public Affairs for the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin. “It’s vitally important that honest consumers maintain access to the cold and allergy medicines they need, and we know that, armed with the knowledge and information communicated through this anti-smurfing initiative, the great people of Wisconsin will stand together in the fight against meth production.”

“The manufacturers of OTC medications containing PSE take very seriously the diversion of our products into the production of methamphetamine,” said Mike Tringale, vice president of communications & public affairs for the CHPA. “We support efforts like this aimed at preventing illegal purchases while ensuring the protection of law-abiding citizens’ rights to the relief provided by OTC cold and allergy medicines. The most effective solutions often require the input and

participation from all sectors of the community, and we believe that this anti-smurfing campaign will bring us one step closer to eliminating meth production in Wisconsin.”

Visit www.meth-knowtheconsequences.com to download campaign materials and learn more about anti-smurfing efforts

In 2006, the federal government passed a law mandating the placement of PSE-containing medications behind the pharmacy counter, and limiting purchased to 3.6 grams per day and 9 grams per 30-day period. The law also requires a purchaser’s signature in a logbook that is accessible by law enforcement.

In 2017, the state of Wisconsin passed legislation to become the 34th state to implement the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx), a real-time electronic stop-sale system provided at no cost to taxpayers or retailers and used by law enforcement to block illegal sales of OTC cold and allergy medications containing precursors to methamphetamine. NPLEx has now been implemented in 35 states across the country, including Wisconsin.