

Dept. of Justice: AG Schimel: Public awareness campaign will show an “altered state” of Wisconsin with rapidly growing meth use

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GREEN BAY, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel, Marshfield Clinic Health System, Northwoods Coalition and the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth kicked off the next phase of the KNOW METH public awareness campaign by announcing \$225,000 in new funding and sharing what an “Altered State” would look like if meth use were to impact time-honored traditions in Wisconsin.

“Meth use is rapidly growing in Wisconsin with nearly a 500% increase in cases from 2010 to 2017,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “Meth use isn’t just affecting the user; it’s hurting our communities and costing Wisconsin \$424 million annually. It is critical that we educate the public to ‘KNOW METH’ and this next phase in our awareness campaign is a tremendous step forward to slow this dangerous epidemic.”

The KNOW METH public awareness campaign was first launched statewide in January 2018, in partnership with Marshfield Clinic Health System, Northwoods Coalition and the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth. The campaign is aimed at preventing people from using methamphetamine and to encourage those who are addicted to seek treatment.

The phase of the KNOW METH launched today will include targeted online, video, television, radio ads, and print materials that will be available on the www.knowmethwi.org website. The campaign messaging will show beloved Wisconsin symbols that are being left in an “Altered State,” similar to what happens

to a meth user's body and life when they become addicted. The campaign will begin airing in late June and early July, targeting over 35 counties in Northern and Western Wisconsin, including in the Green Bay-Appleton, Wausau-Rhineland, and La Crosse-Eau Claire media markets.

"According to USA TODAY Network - Wisconsin, in 2016, 7,390 children were placed outside of their homes due to drug abuse," said Danielle Luther, Manager - Alcohol & Drug Programs, Marshfield Clinic Health System. "Our goal is to encourage communities to talk to children and families members about the risks and dangers of meth use and to get involved by supporting local coalitions and organizations in taking action to prevent meth use."

This phase of the campaign is funded by \$225,000 that was committed to the KNOW METH public awareness by Attorney General Schimel from settlement funds. The Wisconsin State Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) approved Attorney General Schimel's expenditure plan for the campaign in May 2018.

"Meth addiction is a big-time issue in the northern portion of the state, and its heart breaking for everyone involved," said JFC member Rep. Mary Felzkowski of Irma. "I would like to thank Attorney General Schimel and the Department of Justice for their continued hard work on drug awareness, teaching the public how dangerous these drugs are and encouraging them to seek treatments for addiction. The only way to prevent addiction is to refrain from using in the first place, and it's programs like these that prove to be beneficial by educating Wisconsinites on the risks and consequences involved."

Attorney General Schimel has taken additional action against rising methamphetamine use in Wisconsin:

- Appointed three assistant attorney general (AAG) to assist local district attorneys and law enforcement in the prosecution of methamphetamine-related cases; one each assigned to Wausau, Appleton, and Eau Claire to support Northern Wisconsin. This AAG represents the state in criminal cases; advises local prosecutors on matters relating to methamphetamine trafficking; and assists in the development of legislation concerning the growing threat that methamphetamine poses to local communities.
- Hired an analyst at the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC) and purchased equipment for investigating meth labs; and is providing training and

financial support for the efforts of local law enforcement agencies and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. Funding for these initiatives comes from a \$1.5 million Methamphetamine Initiative Grant from the United States Department of Justice.

- Hired four additional criminal investigation agents who are focused on drug interdiction and drug trafficking.
- Increased spending on treatment alternative and diversion courts (TAD) in 51 counties and two tribes, with more than \$6 million provided annually to support these local programs.
- In 2017, Attorney General Schimel successfully sought a stay from the Supreme Court of the United States in *Anderson, et al. v. Loertscher*, a challenge to the state's Unborn Child Protection Act. The Unborn Child Protection Act or 1997 Wisconsin Act 292 gives county health services agencies the legal authority to assist substance-addicted, pregnant women with their addiction, thus protecting both the mothers and their unborn children.

To learn more about the KNOW METH public awareness campaign and to get facts about the impact of meth use in Wisconsin go to: www.knowmethwi.org