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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**First *kNOw Meth* Methamphetamine Enforcement Public Safety Summit
Held in Rhinelander**

RHINELANDER, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), Alliance for Wisconsin Youth, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and the Northwoods Coalition held a public safety summit in Rhinelander, Wis. today to fight methamphetamine use in northern Wisconsin. The summit is part of *kNOw Meth*, a public awareness campaign to prevent methamphetamine use. In January 2018, Attorney General Brad Schimel committed \$50,000 to support the campaign and trainings like those held in Rhinelander on Wednesday.

“Ten years ago, we managed to reduce meth in Wisconsin by shutting down the big labs, but the more potent, addictive, and cheaper meth being abused today is from Mexico and has surged in the state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “This public safety summit will give northern Wisconsin officials the tools they need to crack down on the meth ravaging their communities.”

“We have heard from our partners and communities that law enforcement and criminal justice officials would like more training just on the topic of methamphetamine,” said Danielle Luther, Manager – Alcohol and Drug Programs at Marshfield Clinic Health System – Center for Community Health Advancement. “The training will be repeated in two additional locations to centralize the trainings in locations of the areas most affected.”

This one-day training offered will cover methamphetamine trends in Wisconsin, clandestine lab safety and awareness, best practices for investigation, an overview of DOJ’s Treatment Alternatives and Diversion program and tools for people on the frontlines of the methamphetamine epidemic in Wisconsin.

Attendees at the summit include approximately 55 law enforcement and criminal justice professionals. A similar training will be held in Ashland later this month, and in Rice Lake in June.

In January 2018, Attorney General Schimel committed \$50,000 to support the *kNOw Meth* public awareness campaign and training. The public awareness campaign, launched in partnership with the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and the Northwoods Coalition, raises awareness about methamphetamine use in Wisconsin communities. The campaign informs the public:

- Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant impacting Wisconsin communities;
- Methamphetamine impacts more than just the person abusing the substance, including children and the environment, and;
- Communities should look for signs of addiction, methamphetamine use and trafficking.

In February 2017, Attorney General Schimel briefed the Wisconsin State Legislature on the growing threat of methamphetamine and included findings from a January 2017 joint [DOJ and Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\) study](#). The report details methamphetamine use increased 250 to 300 percent from 2011 to 2015. Recently, the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau (WSCLB) has experienced a 32.3% increase in methamphetamine submissions, from 1,148 in 2016 to 1,696 in 2017.

DOJ also combats methamphetamine through its commitment to the Drug Endangered Children Program (DEC). Cynthia Giese, a DCI Special Agent in Charge (SAC), leads Wisconsin's DEC program and also is currently serving as the interim president of the nationwide program as well. DEC is comprised of multi-disciplinary professionals including law enforcement, child protective services, medical providers, prosecutors, school personnel, and corrections officers. All of these professionals play a role in the rescue and support of drug endangered children. The children are provided with services that assist in providing the drug endangered child with a safe environment in which to live and grow up.

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

- Appointed an assistant attorney general (AAG) to aid local district attorneys and law enforcement in the prosecution of methamphetamine-related cases. 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 state actors the legal authority to assist substance-addicted, pregnant women with their addiction, thus protecting both the mothers and their unborn children.

The [Northwoods Coalition](#), formed in 1995, is the largest and oldest network of coalitions dedicated to substance abuse prevention in Wisconsin. Representatives from more than 50 coalitions in a 34-county region, including the 11 Wisconsin Tribal Nations, serve on a non-governing advisory board to help shape policies, practices and programs to address public health issues arising from use of alcohol and other drugs. Marshfield Clinic Health System staff provide support including education, training, technical assistance and other resources to members of Northwoods Coalition.