

# ILLINOIS METH PROJECT

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## Illinois Meth Project Releases Results of Meth Use & Attitudes Survey

*Statewide data shows one in four young people see little risk in trying Meth*

**Springfield, Illinois—February 11, 2008**—The Illinois Meth Project today released results of the 2007 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions*. The in-depth survey examining Illinois teens' attitudes and behaviors toward methamphetamine shows that many Illinois young people consider Meth an easily accessible, low-risk drug that offers a myriad of benefits.

Nearly one in four teens (22%) reported the drug is readily available and 26% see little risk in giving it a try. The survey also suggests that teens perceive significant benefits in using Meth—21% cite weight loss as a key benefit, 16% believe it will make them happy, and one in 10 teens (12%) say Meth will help them deal with boredom. Not only do some teens see benefit in using Meth, but the data further indicates a relatively low level of social disapproval—49% of teens have not tried to dissuade friends from taking Meth, and nearly one in three (30%) believe their friends would not give them a hard time for using the drug.

“Sadly, adolescents often have little or no factual information about the risks involved with illicit drug use, and make decisions based on incorrect assumptions and perceptions,” said Wendy Bailie, Director of Substance Abuse Services at Franklin-Williamson Human Services, which treats patients with addiction problems, including methamphetamine, at its centers in southern Illinois. “These results clearly show the gross misconceptions teens have regarding methamphetamine use. Many just don't realize the destruction that comes with trying Meth.”

Treatment, law enforcement, and social services data confirms the need for Meth prevention and public awareness. U.S. Department of Justice identifies methamphetamine as the primary drug threat in central and southern Illinois.<sup>i</sup> Methamphetamine's cost to Illinois is roughly \$2 billion per year according to the University of Illinois.

Teens are particularly vulnerable to experimentation with Meth—in Illinois, 72% of people in treatment for methamphetamine began using at age 17 or younger.<sup>ii</sup> While behavioral research shows parent-child communication to be a powerful tool in discouraging risky behavior, survey results showed that 50% of teens have never discussed Meth with their parents.

“Understanding the precise beliefs and attitudes driving Meth use guides the Illinois Meth Project in identifying what messages work and what teens simply tune out,” said Mike Reagan, chairman of the Illinois Meth Project. “This survey is also critical in it helping us track progress as we work to shift attitudes and behaviors towards methamphetamine. To ultimately reduce usage, we need to arm teens with the truth about Meth.”

The survey details findings from a random sample of more than 912 middle and high school students, ages 12 to 17, across the Springfield, Decatur, and Champaign regions. The results offer a window into adolescents' perceptions of this harmful drug and will guide future Illinois Meth Project campaigns.

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The 2007 report also serves as a benchmark to measure future impact of the Illinois Meth Project's large-scale prevention campaign to educate the state's youth about the dangers of methamphetamine use.

The 2007 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions* was executed in September and October 2007, by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The complete report can be obtained on the Illinois Meth Project's website at [www.illinoismethproject.org](http://www.illinoismethproject.org).

**About the Illinois Meth Project**

The Illinois Meth Project is a non-profit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in February 2008, the Illinois Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Illinois Meth Project is established by the Meth Project, a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach.

For more information, visit [www.illinoismethproject.org](http://www.illinoismethproject.org).

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## **Survey Highlights**

Findings from the 2007 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions* revealed that many young people see potential benefits and little risk in taking methamphetamine, find the drug readily available, and have had limited discussions about Meth with their peers or parents. The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings.

All statistics are sourced from the 2007 *Illinois Meth Use & Attitudes Survey: Springfield, Decatur, Champaign Regions* report, which is available at [www.illinoismethproject.org/survey](http://www.illinoismethproject.org/survey).

### **Availability and Usage**

- One in four teens (22%) reports that it would be “very” or “somewhat” easy for them to acquire Meth
- One in ten teens (11%) says that someone has offered them Meth at some point
- 9% of teens report having a friend who uses Meth
- 13% of teens have a family member who has been treated for Meth and 8% have a close friend who uses Meth

### **Perceptions of Methamphetamine**

- One in four teens (26%) sees little to no risk in trying Meth once or twice
- 15% of teens see little to no risk in trying Meth regularly
- Many teens and young adults see significant benefits in using Meth
  - 21% of teens believe that Meth helps you lose weight
  - 16% of teens believe that using Meth will make you happy
  - 12% of teens believe that using Meth will help “deal with boredom”

### **Social Approval and Parental Discussions**

- 31% of teens say their friends would not dissuade them from using Meth
- 50% of teens report they have not tried to dissuade their friends from using Meth
- 49% of teens say they have never discussed Meth with their parents

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<sup>i</sup> Department of Justice. “DEA Fact Sheet: Illinois.” 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS). “Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).” 2003.