

## Smurfing and Meth Lab Eradication



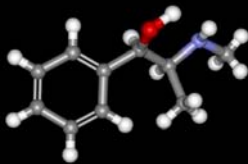
Presented to the  
**California State Senate**  
 Committee on Public Safety Committee  
 August, 2009

## 1. Meth Epidemic Solutions

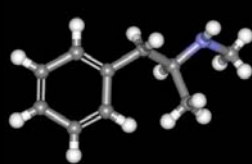
- PSE: The key ingredient necessary to make meth (*d*-methamphetamine)



## Pseudo/ephedrine and Meth



(+)-Pseudoephedrine (C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>15</sub>NO)



(+)-Methamphetamine (C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N)

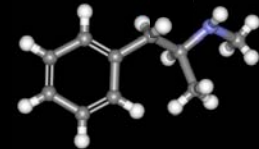
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## A meth lab:

Start with pseudo/ephedrine

Remove the hydroxyl group

Add back hydrogen



(+)-Methamphetamine (C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N)

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## Source of meth manufacture

- In the U.S. before effective PSE controls:
  - 35% of meth from small toxic labs
  - 65% from DTO super labs



Drug raid



## PSE flowing to the super labs



## Most PSE is produced in 9 factories in 3 countries

Pictures courtesy of *The Oregonian*

## Cutting off the supply

### Imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine

A new U.S. regulator calls on countries to estimate their legitimate demand for medicines containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, so authorities can block excessive imports. Amounts in tons.

Largest Importers, 2004		Report Increases, 2000-2004	
Country	2004	2000	2004
U.S.	832	95	173
Mexico	205	38	39
Switzerland	87	12	84
Belgium	72	46	33
Indonesia	64	19	19
Singapore	39	20	39
Canada	37	41	14
South Korea	36	14	12
Germany	35	8	10
United Kingdom	33	4	10

## PSE imports plummet . . .

- Mexico:**
  - 2004 - 226 metric tons
  - 2005 - 98 metric tons
  - 2006 - 43 metric tons
  - 2007 - 40 metric tons
  - 2008 - 0 metric tons
  - 2009 - ban

**Imports**  
North America's imports of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have plummeted 75 percent in the past two years.

2008 is projected based on data through August for the U.S. and Canada, and on Mexico's declared quota of 70 tons for the year.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division

## So in 2006:

- Prediction:**
  - Meth purity would go down
  - Meth price would go up
  - More pressure to cook locally

## Meth purity goes down . . .

### U.S. Methamphetamine Purchase Purity: April 2005 through September 2007

Date	Purity (Mean)
Apr 05	70.5%
Jul Sep 05	70.8%
Oct Dec 05	63.1%
Jan Mar 06	37.7%
Apr Jun 06	37.8%
Jul Sep 06	48.8%
Oct Dec 06	58.8%
Jan Mar 07	56.9%
Apr Jun 07	42.9%
Jul Sept 07	38.1%

From the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2007, the purity of Methamphetamine decreased 31%, from 56.9% to 39.1%.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Methamphetamine Purity Analysis of 37629 Data (Nov 2007).

## Meth price goes up . . .

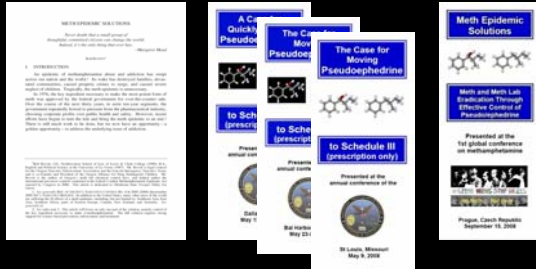
### U.S. Methamphetamine Purchase Prices: April 2005 through September 2007

Date	Price Per Pure Gram (Mean)
Apr 05	\$111.29
Jul Sep 05	\$106.73
Oct-Dec 05	\$132.70
Jan-Mar 06	\$227.63
Apr-Jun 06	\$242.25
Jul-Sep 06	\$166.12
Oct-Dec 06	\$132.87
Jan-Mar 07	\$141.42
Apr-Jun 07	\$197.62
Jul-Sept 07	\$244.53

From the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2007, the price per pure gram of Methamphetamine increased 73%, from \$141.42 to \$244.53.

Source: Drug Enforcement Administration, Methamphetamine Purity/Purchase Price Analysis of 37629 Data (Nov 2007).

So I reminded folks of my prediction . . .  
resurgence of local meth labs . . .



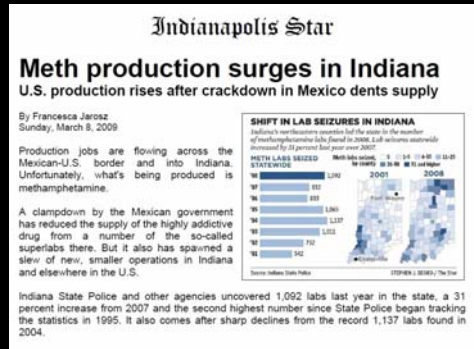
. . . and, unfortunately, it came true



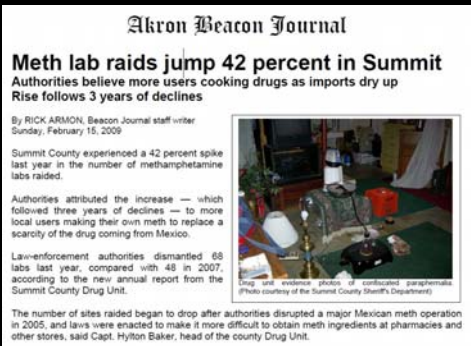
A resurgence . . . from Arizona . . .



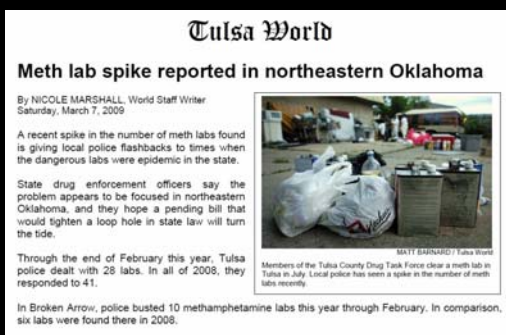
. . . to Indiana . . .



. . . to Ohio . . .



. . . to Oklahoma . . .



... to Tennessee ...

### The Tennessean

#### Meth labs make a comeback in Tennessee

Sunday, May 3, 2009  
By NICOLE YOUNG, The Tennessean

Tennessee drug agents are turning a lucrative profit on outcasts more expensive on

"If we stay on course with 2004 figures," said Tommy highest number since 2004. Tennessee ranked third in County stands out for a split

### Knoxville News Sentinel

#### Officials weigh tougher meth laws after 40% spike in number of labs seized

By J.J. Stambaugh  
Sunday, February 15, 2009

A 40 percent increase in the number of methamphetamine labs seized in Tennessee during the past year is prompting law enforcement officials to ponder stronger laws governing the sale of over-the-counter drugs containing pseudoephedrine.

In 2005, new laws went into effect that limited the sale of so-called "meth precursors" such as Sudafed and created a state registry allowing police to track purchases.

But addicts have since learned new ways of manufacturing meth that threaten to undermine some of the progress that's been made in recent years, according to Tommy Farmer, state director of the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force.

Last year, authorities seized 819 meth labs in Tennessee, including 96 in the month of December, according to task force figures. In 2007, authorities made 533 seizures.



... to Texas ...

### Fort Worth Star-Telegram

#### Rural North Texas sees increase in meth labs

By ALEX BRANCH  
Wednesday, February 4, 2009

All but eliminated in recent years by tough laws restricting access to ingredients, methamphetamine labs are making a small resurgence in rural areas of North Texas, authorities say.

The number of labs is still nowhere near the levels of the early 2000s, when authorities saw 80 to 100 a year. But the arrest last week of 11 people in Wise County was among a handful of new cases in the last six months.

"We're seeing it from around here up through the Red River region," said Capt. Philip Allen of the Texas Department of Public Safety's Narcotics Office for the North Texas Region. "Most of them are the smaller labs, rolling labs where they're cooking it inside vehicles."

"There's no pattern, just here and there."

Some narcotics investigators attribute the uptick to the Mexican government's crackdown on "super labs," warring among drug cartels and the tightening of U.S. border security. Those efforts have combined to reduce the supply entering the U.S. and drive up prices.

Mexican "ice" meth produced by drug cartels filled the void in the U.S. after it became more difficult to buy common cold medicines that contain an important ingredient.

... to Alabama ...

### The Birmingham News

#### Alabama sees resurgence in meth labs 'One-pot' cooking gains popularity

Monday, May 12, 2008  
By MIKE CASON, News staff writer

Alabama is seeing a resurgence in methamphetamine labs, a reversal from the decrease that followed a 2005 state law that made it harder to buy the main ingredients, drug enforcement agents say.

More meth cooks in the past year have started using a simpler, "one-pot" cooking method that takes fewer ingredients and can be mostly completed in a two-liter plastic soft drink bottle, authorities say.

Jason Murray, commander of the Talladega County Drug Task Force, said his agents have found 70 of the "one-pot," or "shake and bake," meth labs since October.

That contrasts with about 45 meth labs the task force found in all of 2007, he said. "It's like somebody turned on a spigot," Murray said.

... to Mississippi ...

### The Clarion-Ledger

#### Mississippi meth labs on rise

Thursday, June 4, 2009

Despite a law making it harder to buy ingredients to make methamphetamine, lab busts are on the rise in Missouri and Mississippi.

The two states lead the nation in meth incidents, although Missouri takes first place by a wide margin.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Capt. Tim Hull said Wednesday that 462 lab busts and discoveries of meth-processing dump sites were reported in Missouri for the first three months of 2009, according to an internal report. That was up from 426 incidents in the first quarter of 2008.

... to Iowa ...

### RADIO IOWA NEWS

#### Number of meth labs found could be up for first time in years

Thursday, January 8, 2009  
By DARWIN DANIELSON

The state's drug czar says a leveling off of the number of meth labs in the state should be incentive to create more control over the sale of one of the key ingredients in the illegal drug. Gary Kendell, Director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy, says after years of a steady decline in numbers, meth lab numbers may've increased last year.

Kendell says preliminary records show 174 meth labs were found in Iowa last year, just four less than in 2007. He says the numbers typically lag a little, so the final numbers could show an increase. "That's troubling to us, because that's first year since we passed the pseudoephedrine restrictions, that we've had an increase in lab," Kendell says.

Pseudoephedrine is an ingredient in many cold medications and the law now restricts the amount that can be purchased at one time, and requires people to sign their names when buying drugs containing it. Kendell says though, "smurfing" or people going from store to store to buy their limit of the medications containing pseudoephedrine, has increased.

... to Louisiana ...

### The News-Star

#### Meth labs making comeback; 3 arrested

Tuesday, March 31, 2009  
By STEPHEN LARGEN

Metro Narcotics agents arrested three West Monroe residents on methamphetamine charges Monday afternoon. According to an arrest affidavit, Kelly Ricks, 34, 408 Gulpha St. No. 1, agreed to pay Ashley Holzem, 26, 415 Gulpha St. No. 4, and Sally Trahan, 51, 401 Gulpha St. No. 6, \$20 each for ingredients used to make methamphetamines.

Agents reportedly found clandestine laboratory materials and several baggies of methamphetamines in a glass case in Ricks' vehicle.

Capt. Hank Smith said a confidential informant provided a tip that led to the arrests. Trahan reportedly told agents she bought lye for Ricks at a farm supply store, while Holzem reportedly said she bought Ephedrine for Ricks at Walgreens.



... to Michigan ...

### Kalamazoo Gazette

#### One-pot recipe boosts meth use in Michigan

February 4, 2008  
By ROSEMARY PARKER, The Kalamazoo Gazette

DETROIT — A slew of tough new laws attacking the menace of methamphetamine seemed to be working: 451 meth-lab busts in Michigan in 2005 fell to 201 in 2007.

But now it seems that lull may have been the calm before a new storm.

Suddenly, meth-lab busts in some southwestern Michigan counties are spiking again, law-enforcement officials say. The reason: a quick new recipe for making the illicit stimulant.

... to Missouri ...

### Kansas City Star

#### Meth lab busts continue rising in Missouri

Wednesday, June 3, 2009  
By JIM SALTER, Associated Press Writer

ST. LOUIS - Despite a law making it harder to buy ingredients to make methamphetamine, lab busts are on the rise in Missouri. Meanwhile, the state continues to lead the nation in meth incidents, and by a wide margin.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Capt. Tim Hull said Wednesday that 462 lab busts and discoveries of meth-processing dump sites were reported in Missouri for the first three months of 2009, according to an internal report. That was up from 426 incidents in the first quarter of 2008.

No other state was even close. Mississippi had the second-highest number of meth incidents, with 146 in the January-through-March period. Michigan was third with 136.

... to Nebraska ...



#### Meth Labs Make Comeback in Nebraska

Monday, April 27, 2009

OMAHA, Neb. - Nebraska drug investigators are concerned that more methamphetamine labs may start showing up in the state.

The number of meth labs dropped significantly after 2005, when laws were changed restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine, a common ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

"We were getting run ragged," Nebraska State Patrol investigator Shane Flynn told KETV Newswatch 7.

... to Kentucky ...



#### Meth Cases on the Rise Again

Wednesday, 12 August 2009

This year is shaping up to be the worst ever for meth in Kentucky

According to drug enforcement agents, so far this year... the number of meth labs discovered and destroyed is on pace to be triple the what was found just two years ago.

In 2005, legislation made it more difficult for meth cooks to buy the core ingredient, pseudoephedrine, but that only put a dent in the problem for awhile.

Agents say meth makers have gotten smarter about how they are buying materials.

They are also making it in smaller batches . . . making it harder for law enforcement to detect.



... to California ...



#### Meth labs flourishing due to loophole

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

SACRAMENTO, CA (KGO) -- After years of decline the number of methamphetamine labs in California is on the rise again. Meth producers are taking advantage of a loophole in a 2005 federal law and now state officials are hoping to close it.

In the Sierra Foothills meth labs are flourishing.

"We still have a lot of methamphetamine on the street," Jackie Long told ABC7. Long is with the State Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement. He says the problem is that the main ingredient in some cold and allergy medicines is also the main ingredient used to make meth. It is called "pseudoephedrine."

In 2005 Congress tried to shut down meth labs by requiring pharmacists to keep pseudoephedrine behind the counter and limit customers to only one package a day. Despite the law, drug enforcement officers say meth manufacturers are still getting plenty of pseudoephedrine.

... and superlabs return to California



The resurgence is fed by . .



Getting rid of smurfing . . .

- Options:
  - 1. Electronic database monitoring
    - Expensive (more arrests and incarceration)
    - Burdensome
    - Reactive (more War on Drugs)
    - Limited impact . . . still have smurfing!
  - 2. Prescription only
    - Oregon . . . since 2006 . . .

Smurfing by example . . .



Smurfing by example . . .



There were only a few “no” votes

- HB 2485 – 9 out of 90
- SB 907 – 1 out of 90

**The Oregonian**  
**Lawmaker faces arrest in Salem on meth charge**

Thursday, October 13, 2005  
JANIE HARR



SALEM – Salem police said Wednesday they intend to arrest Rep. Kelley Wirth, D-Corvallis, on one count of possession of methamphetamine.

The drug was found in Wirth's car when she was struck by another car last month outside the state Capitol. The driver of that car, Lisa Temple, has been charged with attempted murder and assault. Temple is the girlfriend of a Capitol building janitor who claims to have had a sexual relationship with Wirth. She has denied the relationship.

Lt. Bill Kohlmeier, spokesman for the Salem Police Department, said investigators are trying to

## Oregon Results

- Smurfing eliminated!
- Meth labs nearly eliminated!
- Meth lab incident trends remain down!



What's it really meant . . .

- For cold/allergy sufferers . . .

. . . and the pharmaceuticals reformulate . . .



It became a marketing strategy!



## The sky didn't fall

- Few complaints
- No public outcry
- I still live in Oregon
- The CHPA / NACDS parade of horrors never happened
- The law is now broadly celebrated

## Controlling smurfing: A Tale of Two States



- Oregon
  - Returned PSE to Prescription Only
  - You've seen those results above
- Kentucky
  - Gold standard PSE electronic monitoring
  - Results . . .

## Lexington Herald-Leader

### Meth labs back on the rise in Kentucky Toddler's death brought attention to increase

Monday, June 8, 2009  
By Bill Estep, Herald-Leader

The number of illegal methamphetamine labs destroyed in Kentucky has increased in the last 18 months as meth "cookers" have found ways around efforts to limit production of the dangerous, highly addictive drug.

A 2005 change in state law to restrict access to a key ingredient needed to produce meth drove down the number of makeshift labs police found, but only for a while.

The May 30 death of a 22-month-old Wayne County boy who drank drain cleaner his parents allegedly were using to make meth grabbed local and national headlines at a time when the number of labs is going up.



Kayden Bransham, 22 months old, died Saturday night after ingesting a drain cleaner used in cooking meth. He was about a year old in this photo.

## THE RICHMOND REGISTER

### Federal officials: Kentucky third in nation for reports of meth labs

Thursday, August 13, 2009  
By Brian Smith, Register News Writer

LONDON — Representatives of state and federal law enforcement agencies gathered with media members in an airplane hangar Wednesday morning to discuss the rise in methamphetamine production.

The "Meth Awareness 2009" conference was co-sponsored by the U.S. attorney's office for the Eastern District of Kentucky, the Kentucky State Police, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration and Appalachian HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas).

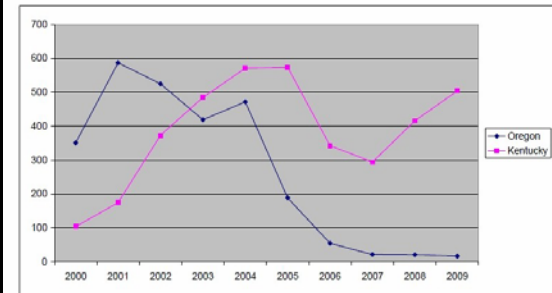
A major focus of the conference was the rise in what law enforcement officers have termed "smurfing," or the practice of methamphetamine cooks using multiple people to purchase pseudoephedrine, a key component of the drug.

Kentucky state law limits individuals to a maximum purchase of nine grams of the substance in a 30-day period, and all purchases of the drug, a common ingredient in cold medicines, are recorded in an electronic database that collects signatures and addresses.

Meth Lab Incidents\*  
Comparing Oregon and Kentucky trend lines

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Oregon	351	587	525	419	472	189	55	22	21	17
Kentucky	104	175	373	485	571	574	343	294	416	504

\* Per EPIC for 2000-2008; 2009 numbers are projections based on January through May data from Oregon (7) and Kentucky (210)



## Lexington Herald-Leader

### Official: State might have to curtail cold medicine further due to meth labs

Wednesday, August 12, 2009  
By Dori Hjalmarson

LONDON — One Kentucky drug enforcement official said the state should further restrict the availability of the cold medicine pseudoephedrine in order to curb a new spike in methamphetamine activity.

Stopping the networks of people who buy pseudoephedrine and resell it to meth manufacturers will require making the cold medicine a Schedule IV controlled substance, available only by prescription, or banning it altogether, said Dave Keller, who heads the Kentucky portion of the Appalachia High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

"In my opinion, that's the next step we're going to have to do," Keller said.



The Oregon alternative "offers an effective approach . . . if broadly adopted, there would be no reason to develop state or national tracking systems, resulting in substantial, ongoing savings . . ."

- NAMSDL Meth Precursor  
Tracking Advisory Committee

## Conclusion

- **Assembly Bill 1455:**
  - Reactionary: More War on Drugs
  - More arrests and incarceration
  - Does not solve the problem
- **Senate Bill 484:**
  - Proactive: Pure prevention
  - Proven and effective
  - Solves the problem