



ATLANTA - A RAND Corporation study, "The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States," estimates that the national cost of Meth abuse in one year alone exceeds \$23.4 billion.

The study marks the first time the annual costs of methamphetamine abuse—including the intangible costs associated specifically with methamphetamine addiction— have been analyzed on a national scale. Based on the RAND cost model and current use rates in Georgia, Meth use could cost the state \$1.3 billion each year.

The study found that methamphetamine abuse imposes a significant and disproportionate burden on both individuals and society in money spent on treatment, healthcare, and foster care services, as well as the costs of crime and lost productivity associated with the drug.

In 2007, 32% of federal drug offenses in Georgia involved methamphetamine, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy and for the last five years methamphetamine has been the fastest growing drug problem in Atlanta, Dalton, and Gainesville.



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"Methamphetamine is crippling our state. We spend millions each year on Meth-related incarcerations alone, and yet the number of addicts in Georgia continues to grow rapidly," said Georgia Attorney General Thurbert Baker. "If we do nothing, our criminal justice system will reach a breaking point. As a state, we must take a stand against this drug that is all too rapidly addicting our youth."

In response to the growing Meth problem in the state, Attorney General Baker and other key state leaders are working with the private sector to establish the Georgia Meth Project, a large-scale prevention program aimed at reducing Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. Central to the program will be a statewide research-based messaging

campaign that communicates the risks of Meth use, paired with community outreach programs. The Meth Project currently operates in Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, Montana, and Wyoming. Montana and Arizona, the first two states to launch Meth Project prevention campaigns in 2005 and 2007, respectively, have seen 45% reductions in teen Meth use in two years.

"Our goal in sponsoring this study was to provide a definitive economic cost estimate of the Meth problem that legislators and regulators can consider while establishing social priorities," said Tom Siebel, founder and chairman of the Meth Project. "This appears to be a preventable problem. The staggering economic and human costs of Meth use can be avoided."

The Georgia Meth Project campaign will focus on preventing Meth use among the state's most vulnerable population, its young people. According to the Department of Health, 51% of people entering treatment for Meth in Georgia are between the ages of 12 and 25, substantially higher than the national average, and Georgia is third in the nation in total number of Meth users between the ages of 12 and 17. The Georgia Meth Project is working to secure funding from the private sector to launch its statewide prevention campaign later this year.

To view the full results of the RAND study, please visit [www.methproject.org](http://www.methproject.org).  
About the Meth Project

The Meth Project is a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. The Montana Meth Project, Arizona Meth Project, Idaho Meth Project, Illinois Meth Project and Wyoming Meth Project implement the Meth Project prevention programs in their respective states. For more information, visit [www.methproject.org](http://www.methproject.org).

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