

GEORGIA METH PROJECT®

Georgia Meth Project Releases Results of Statewide Meth Use & Attitudes Survey

Research Shows 35% of Georgia Teens See Little or No Risk in Trying Meth

ATLANTA—March 8, 2010—The Georgia Meth Project today released the results of a first-ever statewide survey examining the attitudes and behaviors that Georgia teens, young adults, and parents have toward methamphetamine. The survey found that 35% of teens see little or no risk in trying Meth, and 23% see little or no risk in using the drug regularly. Twenty percent of Georgia teens (20%) and 34% of young adults report that Meth is easy to get.

A substantial number of Georgia teens and young adults believe there are specific benefits to using methamphetamine. Twenty-one percent (21%) of teens and 32% of young adults say that Meth will help with weight loss, 19% of teens and 23% percent of young adults believe that using Meth will make you happy, and 16% of Georgia teens and 19% of young adults say Meth will help alleviate boredom.

In addition to seeing benefits in taking Meth, sizable numbers of Georgia teens are unaware of specific risks associated with Meth use. Despite the well-documented dangers of experimenting with Meth, nearly one in five (18%) of teens see little risk that trying Meth could cause brain damage. One in five do not believe that Meth can cause someone to become violent or paranoid (21%) or put them at risk of having sex with someone they don't want to (20%).

The survey shows a relatively low level of disapproval of Meth use among teens and their peers—39% say their friends would not give them a “hard time” if they used Meth and 53% say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from using the drug. Eight percent (8%) of teens and 10% of young adults report having a close friend who uses Meth.

Behavioral research has established that parent/child communication is one of the best prevention methods for reducing risky behavior, yet the data also show that 58% of teens say their parents have never talked with them about Meth.

“We have conducted research on perceptions of Meth use in several states and nationally—these numbers tell us that many teens and young adults in Georgia are not adequately educated about the dangers of methamphetamine,” said Geoff Feinberg, Vice President of Research, GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. “This survey clearly demonstrates that many of Georgia’s young people are unaware of the risks posed by Meth use and they are not communicating with their parents about the drug.”

Substance abuse experts expressed concern that a lack of education about the dangers of Meth use puts Georgia’s young people at risk for experimenting with the highly addictive and dangerous substance.

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“The Georgia Meth Project’s public education effort is crucial because the data shows that teens are not getting information about methamphetamine,” said Thomas Bornemann, Director, Mental Health Program at The Carter Center. “Meth is highly addictive and can cause dramatic changes in the brain, irreversible physical damage, and extreme psychosis. It is alarming that many of our young people see little risk—and even some benefits—in using Meth, and that many of them have access to the drug. We need to change these perceptions, and I applaud the Georgia Meth Project and the leaders of the state for taking bold and decisive action to address this issue.”

The *Georgia Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* was executed from November 2009 to February 2010 by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media. The results were announced at the launch of the Georgia Meth Project’s statewide Meth prevention campaign at the Georgia State Capitol today. The survey was conducted among randomly selected and representative samples of 2,432 teens, 314 young adults, and 400 parents of teens. To view the full *Georgia Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, please visit www.georgiamethproject.org/Research.

About the Georgia Meth Project

The Georgia 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 2010, the Georgia Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Georgia Meth Project is affiliated with 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.georgiamethproject.org.

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Survey Highlights

Findings from the 2010 *Georgia Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* reveal that although there is general disapproval of the drug, many teens are unaware of the risks of methamphetamine use, significant numbers of teens and young adults see potential benefits in taking the drug, and discussions are limited between young people and their peers, and between young people and their parents. The following highlights some of the survey's principal findings.

All statistics are sourced from the *Georgia Meth Use & Attitudes Survey* report, which is available at www.georgiamethproject.org/Research.

Availability and Usage

- 33% of young adults and 20% of teens say Meth is easy to acquire; 49% of parents say Meth would be easy for their teenager to get;
- One in five (20%) of 12-24 year-olds says someone has offered them or tried to get them to use Meth (30% of young adults, 9% of teens).

Perceptions of Meth

Sizable numbers of young adults and teens perceive little risk in taking Meth, and many actually see benefits in taking the drug:

- 35% of teens say there is little or no risk to taking Meth once or twice, and 23% say there is little to no risk in regular use;
- Many young adults and teens see benefits in using Meth:
 - 32% of young adults and 21% of teens believe that Meth helps you lose weight;
 - 26% of young adults and 17% of teens believe that using Meth gives you energy;
 - 23% of young adults and 19% of teens believe that using Meth will make you feel euphoric or very happy;
 - 19% of young adults and 16% of teens believe that using Meth will help you deal with boredom.

Social Approval and Parental Discussions

The survey shows a relatively low level of disapproval of Meth use among teens and their peers:

- 39% of teens say their friends would not give them a hard time for using Meth;
- 46% of teens say they have not tried to dissuade their friends from using Meth;
- 58% of teens say they have never discussed the subject of Meth with their parents.