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Georgia Meth Use and Attitudes Survey 2010

The Valdosta Daily Times

VALDOSTA — The Georgia Meth Project conducts the Georgia Meth Use and Attitudes Survey to track attitudes and behaviors related to methamphetamine across the state.

The following findings are from a benchmark study conducted from November 2009 through February 2010, prior to the launch of the Georgia Meth Project in March.

Availability

- One in four 12-24-year-olds (28 percent) says it would be at least somewhat easy for him or her to get meth. One in five Georgia teens (20 percent) says it would be at least somewhat easy for him or her to get meth. One in three young adults (34 percent) says it would be easy to acquire the drug.
- About one in eight 12-24-year-olds (13 percent) says someone has offered them or tried to get them to use meth. One in six young adults (17 percent) and 9 percent of teens say someone has offered them or tried to get them to use meth.
- Parents are inclined to believe it would be easy for their teen to get meth, with half (49 percent) reporting they believe it would be at least somewhat easy.

Perceived Risks and Benefits of Meth Use

- Fewer than half of Georgia teens believe there is “great risk” to trying meth (41 percent), and 35 percent see little or no risk in trying the drug. Moreover, nearly one in four (23 percent) says there is “little” or “no risk” in using the drug regularly.
- While the majority of Georgia young adults (62 percent) and parents (90 percent) believe there is “great risk” in trying meth, nearly one in five young adults (17 percent) believes there is “little” or “no risk” to trying the drug.
- Respondents were presented with a list of 14 potential negative outcomes from trying meth and were asked to rate each one as to whether there would be “great,” “moderate,” “only a little,” or “no risk” of the outcome occurring to a person who tries meth. The number of teens who see “little” or “no risk” in the outcomes is worth pointing out, particularly for those items that teens believe constitute a low risk. One in five — or more — teens saw “little” or “no risk” of suffering tooth decay (27 percent), getting insomnia (23 percent), dying (22 percent), lack of hygiene (21 percent), becoming violent (21 percent), becoming paranoid (21 percent), or having

sex with someone they don't want to (20 percent).

- Like teens, as many as a third of young adults see “little” or “no risk” in a number of the 14 negative outcomes associated with trying meth, including suffering tooth decay (31 percent), lack of hygiene (24 percent), dying (19 percent), stealing (17 percent), suffering brain damage (17 percent), becoming violent (16 percent) or having sex with someone they don't want to (15 percent).
- Solid majorities of parents, presented with the same 14 potential negative outcomes, see “great risk” of each occurring after trying meth.
- Many Georgia teens, young adults, and parents believe there are specific benefits to trying meth, including weight loss (21 percent, 32 percent and 41 percent, respectively), feeling euphoric or very happy (19 percent, 23 percent and 29 percent), increased energy (17 percent, 26 percent and 29 percent), dealing with boredom (16 percent, 19 percent and 16 percent), and escaping problems (11 percent, 12 percent and 19 percent).

Social Approval of Meth

- Four in 10 teens (39 percent) and 24 percent of young adults agree their friends would not give them a “hard time” if they, themselves, should ever use meth.
- Moreover, half of teens (53 percent) and 44 percent of young adults say they have not told their friends to avoid meth.

Meth Use

- About one in 10 Georgia teens says he or she has close friends who use meth (8 percent). One in 25 says he or she has friends who have been in treatment for meth use (4 percent).
- One in 10 young adults has close friends who use the drug (10 percent) or has friends who have been treated for meth use (10 percent).
- About one in 10 teens (11 percent) and young adults (9 percent) has family members who have been in treatment for meth.
- About one in 10 young adults (9 percent) and one in 33 Georgia teens (3 percent) admits to having tried meth.
- Over half of parents believe it is at least somewhat likely that teens and young adults in their community use meth (77 percent) and that classmates of their own teens use the drug (66 percent).

Parent-Child Communications

- The majority of both teens and young adults say they have never discussed the subject with their parents (58 percent and 54 percent, respectively).

- Two in three teens (64 percent) and seven in 10 young adults (70 percent) say they have not discussed the subject of meth with their parents in the past year.
- Most parents (77 percent), however, say they have discussed the subject with their teen in the past year.