



## So. GA meth use growing

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By Jim Wallace

ALBANY, GA (WALB) – State officials say Methamphetamine use is one of Georgia's most critical crime and public health problems.

That's why they launched a prevention campaign. They estimate meth use costs the state more than a billion dollars a year in law enforcement and treatment costs.

Meth is epidemic in North Georgia in the Atlanta and Gainesville areas, but South Georgia drug agents say they are now seeing a big increase in meth use as well. The new state marketing campaign against meth will target teens, trying to keep them from experimenting with it.

South Georgia drug agents say they welcome the Georgia Meth Project ad campaign, launched statewide this week, because the highly addictive drug is making a comeback.

"It's getting popular again," said Albany Dougherty Drug Unit Commander Major Bill Berry.

In 2008 ADDU drug agents seized \$2,000 worth of meth. In 2009 the seizures had risen to \$16,000. In the first two months of 2010 agents have already seized \$17,000 worth of meth. Major Berry says they expect to see more.

"Other drugs are not as plentiful, or hard to get. Meth is one of those things you can virtually make it in your home. And more people are getting involved, switching over. Looking for something new."

In the TV ad, the teenage girl says "I'm going to smoke this just once. I'm going to steal just once."

The Georgia Meth Project say methamphetamine is one of the most highly addictive drugs available, and wants to educate young people about the risks. Drug agents say the campaign will help them.

"Always, anything like that helps. Awareness helps, so people know what to look for," Berry said.

You will start seeing lots of advertising on TV and billboards, trying to stop the surge of meth use in Georgia.



Surveys by the Georgia Meth Project found that 34% of young adults said meth is easy to get. 35% of Georgia teens see little to no risk trying meth, and more than half of the state's teens said their parents had never talked with them about meth dangers.

This ad campaign wants to change that attitude.

DEA agents say Atlanta is a strategic hub for drug trafficking, and that is another reason meth is plentiful in Georgia.

- [Click HERE](#) to learn more about the Georgia Meth Project.

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