

Georgia Ranks 3rd in Nation for Teen Meth Use

Georgia Ranks 3rd in Nation for Teen Meth Use

Law enforcement in Effingham County have long talked about the rise in meth use there. Tuesday night, they got some help from the folks from the Georgia Meth Project, a public awareness campaign to...



By [Tuquyen Mach](#) | Reporter
Published: May 4, 2010

GUYTON, Ga.—A new survey shows 35 percent of teenagers think there's little or no risk in trying the drug, and that's a trend experts say needs to stop.

Since January, the Effingham County sheriff's office has arrested 20 people on meth-related charges and shut down eight meth labs.

"This is a drug 4-5 times more powerful than crack cocaine. Georgia ranks third in the country in the number of teenage users," said Jim Langford, executive director of the Georgia Meth Project.

The Georgia Meth Project brought their message to Effingham County Tuesday. Experts talked about the dangers of meth and the cost.

"The cost to Georgia is \$1.3 billion a year in everything from lost productivity to healthcare costs, foster care costs, all kinds of things," said Langford.

That's why public awareness commercials from the Georgia Meth Project have started airing around the state. Effingham County officials said it's a problem we can't afford to ignore.

"Every county throughout our state has a meth problem, whether we want to admit it or not. It's here. It has come to Georgia," said Effingham County Sheriff Jimmy McDuffie.

The forum at Effingham County Middle School in Guyton was designed to get the community involved in prevention.



“More people that know about it, more people can help us look for it. The more people you’ve got looking, the better chance we have of being able to do something about it,” said McDuffie.

Heather Sandstrom brought her 9 year-old son to the forum so he could learn about the dangers.

“We’re trying to educate him on drugs and the awareness of, and just trying to advocate through him to other children,” said Sandstrom.

The Georgia Meth Project wants more parents involved to prevent more kids from trying the drug and getting hooked.

“Get these communities motivated. Let them understand the dangers of meth. Most of the people in these communities understand the problems, but let’s get them organized,” said Langford.

Sheriff McDuffie said it’s gotten so easy for people to make meth in confined spaces that it’s not uncommon now for criminals to be able to make meth in the trunk of a car, creating even more potential for danger should there be an accident.

The Effingham County Sheriff’s Office has a four-person Drug Suppression Team that mainly focuses on investigating meth.

The Georgia Meth Project was started last year, focusing on preventing meth abuse among Georgia’s young people. Many of the powerful television ads air on WSAV.

The ads focus on the dangers of trying meth, even once. The campaign also includes radio, print, billboard, and internet advertising.

Georgia Meth Project is based on a similar program that was started in Montana. Officials say first time meth use decreased by about 65 percent in the first year after the commercials began airing.