No Mething Around

A Montana campaign uses shock and awe to prevent meth use (and HIV) among teens.

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Five years ago, the state of Montana ranked fifth in the nation for methamphetamine (meth) use. Fifty percent of its prisoners were incarcerated for meth-related crimes, and half of foster care admissions were linked to the highly addictive psychoactive drug.

But the Montana Meth Project, a statewide multimedia prevention campaign targeting youth ages 12 to 17, has turned the state's meth problems around by preventing first time use. Its motto? "Not even once."

Since the project launched in 2005, teen use of meth declined 63 percent, adult use dropped 72 percent and meth-related crime sank 62 percent. Montana now ranks 39th in the nation for meth use.

The graphically disturbing TV and print ads show the dangers of meth addiction in gritty details—including the dire consequences of sharing needles while injecting meth and engaging in unprotected sex while under its influence.

One print ad shows two teenage girls posing as meth users. The copy reads: "My friends and I share everything. Now we share hepatitis and HIV." Thanks to the Montana Meth Project, this is less and less a reality every day.

For more information on the project, visit montanameth.org.

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