



REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREMIER'S TASK FORCE ON CRYSTAL METH



"They are not gone who live in the hearts they leave behind." – TUSCARORA

## **DEDICATION TO ROBERT DAY**

This report is dedicated to the memory of Robert Day. He was a valued member of the Premier's Task Force on Crystal Meth.

He saw the Task Force and this report as a starting point for building communities that were free of deadly drugs like crystal meth and a safe place to raise our children.

Robert's compassion and empathy for youth and communities impacted by this insidious drug were well recognized by all that worked with him.

His legacy will be his vision and commitment for the well being of all children, youth and young adults, now and in the future.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE TASK FORCE**

We began this process with a clear objective: to recommend a comprehensive, province-wide, holistic strategy to address the alarming problem of crystal meth in communities across the province. A strategy that builds on the strengths and capacity of all communities. And a strategy that will save countless young lives and families from the devastating impact of crystal meth addiction.

Our vision is an Alberta committed to eliminating the growing problems of crystal and other forms of methamphetamine abuse through prevention, awareness, treatment, healing and law enforcement.

When we took on this challenge, members of the Premier's Task Force on Crystal Methamphetamine made a commitment that everyone's voice would be heard, whether it was the voice of one or the voice of many. We learned a great deal as we traveled across the province, meeting with Albertans, and we are honoured to present our findings and recommendations.

Community leaders all across the province – whether they are health care providers, elders, Aboriginal leaders, educators, municipal or business leaders, law enforcement members or volunteers with community agencies - all share responsibility for controlling the production, sale and use of crystal meth and other illegal drugs, and ensuring that Alberta, collectively, provides a strong, successful and coordinated approach to prevention and healing.

This is not a role for governments alone. Albertans have the collective ability to stop the rampant damage of this drug and fight back. They have the collective ability to ensure a future environment that is healthy, safe and productive for our youth.

The members of the Premier's Task Force on Crystal Meth wish to extend a special thank you to Premier Ralph Klein for his vision and leadership in establishing this group to tackle the important issue of crystal meth abuse in Alberta.

We also thank the partnering Ministries of Health and Wellness, Solicitor General and Public Security, Children's Services, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Justice, Human Resources and Employment, Municipal Affairs, Education, Advanced Education, Environment and Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for their cooperation and participation.

It is our united commitment to work with all of the stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of the recommendations contained within this report. Together, we can fight back ... we can make a difference in the lives of our children, youth and adults and help put an end to crystal meth abuse in our province.

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**Dr. Colleen Klein** Chair

Dr. Robert Westbury Chair

SEPTEMBER 2006

## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

#### Dr. Colleen Klein

#### Task Force Chair

"It breaks my heart to see the terrible damage crystal meth is causing in Alberta communities. It takes so much from its victims....it steals their health, their relationships and their hopes for the future. In far too many cases, it steals their very lives. These are losses I refuse to accept. I'm honoured to be working with a great team of people who are dedicated to battling crystal meth and I encourage all Albertans to learn more about what they can do to join us in this fight. I believe it's a battle we can win if we work together."

#### Dr. Bob Westbury

Task Force Chair and Chair of Telus Community Board "I have four grandchildren - they are precious, they are innocent and they are irreplaceable. Like most grandparents, my wife and I have wonderful dreams and aspirations for each of them. But I know they will face a myriad of challenges as they strive to fulfill their own goals and ambitions. My hope is that, somehow, through the dedicated efforts of the members of the Task Force, we will eliminate some of these challenges and help eradicate a vicious drug that has already enslaved far too many children. And maybe, just maybe, grandchildren everywhere will be a little bit safer."

#### Robert Day

Senior Vice President, TransCanada Corporations

"Crystal meth knows no boundaries and there is not a business in Alberta that is immune to its devastating impact on the health and safety of our employees. It is imperative that private industry works together with government, law enforcement, treatment facilities, communities, and most importantly, our employees, to develop a holistic approach to fight this insidious drug. I believe a united front is our only defense if we are to confront and defeat the terrible faces and ways of crystal meth."

#### Don Falk

Superintendent, Red Deer Public Schools

"As an educator and a parent, I want our students, their families and our schools to do everything they can to prevent the spread of crystal meth and other illicit drugs. This Task Force has the opportunity to be the first of its kind to fight the advancement of a drug before it reaches into the very core of our communities and our society. Together, we can accomplish something that will have a positive impact on young and old today, and present a brighter future for our youth tomorrow."

#### Murray Finnerty

#### CEO, AADAC

"Crystal meth is the next wave in addiction and substance abuse. While AADAC has been treating addictions and substance abuse for over 50 years, we are excited by the potential of this Task Force. Crystal meth is such a dangerous drug – it is only through the work of this Task Force, that we, together, can connect with communities, families, youth and all affected stakeholders to develop broad, far-reaching solutions for effective treatment and healing."

#### Mary Anne Jablonski

#### MLA - Red Deer North

"It is very important to me that families, parents and kids have as many avenues, resources and places to turn to when they are caught in the cycle of addiction to crystal meth and other drugs. Children involved in drugs are often victims in need, and I am proud of the efforts to date of the Alberta government to support their healing and recovery. This Task Force is the next step. Together, consulting with communities and Albertans, I know we can end what crystal meth has been taking from our youth and from our province."

#### Dan MacLennan

President, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees

"Unfortunately, crystal meth is becoming more common than ever before. It is a horrific and dangerous trend. I want to work with the Task Force to find solutions that support the workplace so employees and employers are more aware of the dangers of crystal meth and have the information and tools they need in place to stop it from spreading further."

#### Diana McQueen

#### Mayor, Town of Drayton Valley

"The magnitude and the nature of the crystal meth problem needed a community approach to the issue. Pulling together, as a community, to deal with community issues is what Drayton Valley does naturally. So, in the true spirit of "pulling together", the community again rose to the challenge of dealing with this toxic menace. I am, therefore, most pleased to be a part of this Task Force and to have the chance to talk, work and share our successful strategies with other communities, so that, together we can prevent crystal meth's deadly impact."

#### Dr. Franco Pasutto

Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Alberta

"Crystal meth is an exceptional circumstance that will require exceptional measures. Pharmacists can play a key role not only in prevention and awareness with respect to the patients they see, but also in monitoring the availability of precursors or ingredients that go into producing meth. Indeed, the public and health professional communities must be fully engaged in the development and delivery of sustainable solutions to the use of this catastrophic drug."

## Staff Sergeant Ian Sanderson

#### RCMP

"As a member of the police community, I am excited about the role that law enforcement can play in a province-wide, crystal meth strategy. Not only do we have a critical role in reducing the supply and demand for crystal meth and methamphetamines, but we have a very important role in prevention. I look forward to consulting with the many stakeholders involved in the law enforcement and judicial system to find realistic solutions to improve our ability to address all issues surrounding crystal meth. We must remember that the devastation from this new drug trend can be prevented by working together."

#### **Carol Secondiak**

Chair, Palliser Health Region

"Crystal meth is a powerful drug with a frightening impact on the human body, mind and spirit. I am pleased to represent the health care community on the Task Force on Crystal Meth. The entire health profession and community will have to play a critical role in our solutions to the treatment and most importantly, the healing of those addicted to and affected by, crystal meth."

#### **Bronwyn Shoush**

#### Director,

Aboriginal Justice Initiatives,

Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security

"It is an honour to have been appointed to the Premier's Task Force on Crystal Methamphetamine. Where crystal meth, other drugs, crime and violence are concerned, aboriginal communities have been clear that the safety and security of the community comes first; and everyone in the community – elders, women, men and youth – have roles, responsibilities, strengths and abilities to address supply and demand issues. These can be supported by laws, government departments, agencies, health authorities, police, neighbors, and others through holistic approaches that focus on youth leadership, prevention, health promotion, awareness, healing programs, law enforcement and individual accountability to families and community."

#### Silvia Vajushi

Executive Director, AADAC

"Our children and young adults need committed and caring people and places to turn to when they make the decision to end their use of crystal meth and other drugs. Our Task Force heard from many voices committed to this cause. These voices will enable us to create the momentum and solutions necessary to help children, families and all adults address the challenges that come with any drug addiction. Through the legacy that will be created by this Task Force and my work with AADAC, I remain dedicated to making sure those voices continue to be heard long after our work as a Task Force is complete."

## THANK YOU

THE TASK FORCE WOULD LIKE TO THANK the many people who assisted us in various ways in learning about this issue and preparing our report. Literally hundreds of people were involved in the process from individuals, families, organizations and communities affected by crystal meth to law enforcement officers, judges, health care providers, counselors and experts. We also received tremendous support from a team of people who facilitated and supported our work. This report would not be possible without their contributions, ideas, and willingness to participate. And we sincerely thank all of you.

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Premier's Task Force on Crystal Meth **Terms of Reference** Summary of Recommendations

See the inside back cover of this report for information about where to go for help.

# " This is a fight we can all win."

– participant in consultations

Crystal meth is a highly addictive form of methamphetamine. With a long-lasting high and the sense of overwhelming euphoria it produces, those who use it become quickly addicted and experience more intense effects from prolonged use compared to other drugs.

The use and abuse of crystal meth is on the rise in Alberta. Its prevalence is growing as dealers find new ways to target potential users and sell the drug. It is in our communities, our schools, our families and our workplaces. It knows no boundaries in who it can affect - young or old, man or woman, rich or poor. Its presence, however, is gaining momentum, most notably, among street-involved youth, specific groups within the gay male community and young adults in the party scene.

The menace of crystal meth is real. The damaging effects are rampant and far-reaching. As a province, we can and we must fight back.

In October 2005, the Government of Alberta announced The Premier's Task Force on Crystal Methamphetamines, including community representatives, the private sector and government, to oversee the development of a province-wide, holistic strategy to stop the abuse and negative impacts of crystal meth and methamphetamines in Alberta.

Through a comprehensive consultation process, the Task Force met with groups and individuals across

the province. Six key areas were targeted for in-depth discussions and consultations with key stakeholders, groups and individuals, including youth, Aboriginal people, communities, industry, law enforcement, and healing. In addition to the consultations, we also collected a significant amount of information about crystal meth, its impact on people who use it and their families and friends, and solutions that have been tried in other jurisdictions across Canada and around the world.

As the consultations took place, three overarching themes emerged as the consistent focus.

**Prevention** Find the best ways of preventing people from starting to use crystal meth in the first place.

**Healing and treatment** For those who do get caught in the web of addiction, make sure they get access to treatment and longer-term support to help them heal.

**Getting tough** Go after the drug dealers and drug producers and get crystal meth off the streets.

The recommendations outlined in our report respond directly to the concerns identified under each of those three themes. Our recommendations also call for a comprehensive province-wide strategy supported and funded by the provincial government. Several recommendations focus on prevention, giving our children a healthy start in life, raising awareness about crystal meth, engaging communities and industry leaders in taking action, and ensuring a coordinated approach in our efforts to stamp out crystal meth. We call for a significant increase in detoxification, treatment and after care support for individuals and families affected by crystal meth. Specific recommendations call for actions to support Aboriginal children, youth, young people and communities affected by crystal meth. We outline specific actions to get crystal meth off our streets and get tough on drug dealers and producers including actions that affect policing, our laws, and our courts. And we also outline steps that can be taken to improve services, provide education and training, and make Alberta a leading centre in crystal meth research.

Our recommendations provide a comprehensive approach to tackling the devastation caused by crystal meth. Now it's time for action.

It will take a great deal of dedication to follow through on the recommendations in our report and to see the real outcomes and tangible results we all want and expect. With the help and dedication of each and every Albertan, we will begin to prevent the use and abuse of crystal meth and other drugs in our communities. Ultimately, we can create a meth-free future for Alberta's children and youth, a positive future that's full of opportunity.

## I am Meth

I destroy homes, I tear families apart. I take your children and that's just the start.

> I'm more costly than diamonds, more precious than gold. The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.

If you need me, remember I'm easily found. I live all around you – in schools and in town.

I live with the rich; I live with the poor. I live down the street, and maybe next door.

> I'm made in a lab, but not like you think. I can be made under the kitchen sink.

> > In your child's closet, and even in the woods. If this scares you to death, well it certainly should.

I have many names, but there's one you know best. I'm sure you've heard of me, my name is crystal meth.

> My power is awesome, try me you'll see. But if you do, you may never break free.

Just try me once and I might let you go. But try me twice and I'll own your soul.

When I possess you, you'll steal and you'll lie. You do what you have to – just to get high.

> The crimes you'll commit for my narcotic charms. Will be worth the pleasure you'll feel in your arms.

You'll lie to your Mother, you'll steal from your Dad. When you see their tears, you should feel sad.

> But you'll forget your morals and how you were raised. I'll be your conscience, I'll teach you my ways.

> > I take kids from parents and parents from kids. I turn people from God and separate friends.

I'll take everything from you, your books and your pride. I'll be with you always – right by your side.

> You'll give up everything – your family, your home. Your friends, your money, then you'll be alone.

I'll take and take, 'til you have nothing more to give. When I'm finished with you, you'll be lucky to live.

If you try me be warned – this is no game. If given the chance, I'll drive you insane.

> I'll ravish your body, I'll control your mind. I'll own you completely; your soul will be mine.

> > The nightmares I'll give you while lying in bed. The voices you'll hear, from inside your head.

The sweats, the shakes, the visions you'll see. I want you to know, these are all gifts from me.

> But then it's too late and you'll know in your heart. That you are mine, and we shall not part.

You'll regret that you tried me, they always do. But you came to me, not I to you.

You knew this would happen, many times you were told. But you challenged my power, and chose to be bold.

> You could have said not, and just walked away. If you could live that day over, now what would you say?

I'll be your master, you will be my slave. I'll even go with you, when you go to your grave.

> Now that you have met me, what will you do? Will you try me or not? It's all up to you.

> > I can bring more misery than words can tell. Come take my hand, let me lead you to Hell.

> > > – Anonymous