
FACTSHEET

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

B.C.'S CRYSTAL METH STRATEGY

British Columbia – A National Leader

- In 2004, B.C. became the first jurisdiction in Canada to announce an integrated crystal meth strategy.

Key commitments included:

- Working closely with police to shut down meth labs and put producers and dealers out of business.
- Consulting with the BC College of Pharmacists and Health Canada to make it harder for producers to get their hands on bulk orders of common cold medicines, which can be used to make meth.
- Pressuring the federal government to increase criminal consequences for those who make and traffic the drug.
- In November 2004, B.C. hosted the first western Canadian summit on meth use, bringing together doctors, counsellors, pharmacists, police, lawyers and government.
- In response to provincial pressure, Ottawa announced it was bringing in tougher penalties for people convicted of producing and trafficking meth.

The Provincial Response

- In October 2005, Premier Gordon Campbell announced a \$7-million initiative to combat the spread of crystal meth use and addiction.
- The Province also created the Crystal Meth Secretariat within the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to implement the initiative cross-government and develop a broader meth strategy – including a timetable for action with multi-year spending requirements. The secretariat is supported by a cross-ministry steering committee.
- The funding addresses the crystal meth problem on three fronts:
 - Community based initiatives: \$2 million is currently being distributed to individual communities in grants of up to \$10,000, for community-based anti-meth initiatives. The grants are being administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities.

- Treatment enhancement: The Ministry of Health is working with the six health authorities to distribute \$2 million aimed at enhancing existing treatment programs.]
- Public awareness campaigns: \$1 million is earmarked for school-based awareness initiatives. A working group co-chaired by the secretariat and the Ministry of Education, and including representatives from three school districts, parent advisory committees, and the Addictions Research Centre, is currently developing content and a delivery strategy. Another \$2 million is targeted for a major public awareness advertising campaign, scheduled for 2006.
- The Province is also sponsoring crystal meth community forums in Vancouver, Kamloops, Prince George, Courtenay and Richmond. The forums will focus on local responses to the threat of meth, and on developing local strategies for dealing with the problem. Guest speakers will include experts on meth use and production in B.C., health-care professionals, and representatives from local community groups, health authorities and police.
- With the new Provincial budget, government confirmed its commitment to protect BC’s youth from crystal meth with an additional \$2 million over three years for the Crystal Meth Secretariat.
- B.C. is also increasing annual funding by \$8 million for crystal meth treatment options and youth addictions services, including increasing bed capacity for youth with addictions by 75 per cent and building treatment programs and supports for crystal meth users.
- The new funding is being added to the base budgets of all six health authorities. \$6 million is dedicated to youth addictions treatment and \$2 million to crystal meth treatment programs.
- The new annual funding will be distributed as follows:
 - Vancouver Coastal Health – \$2,183,915.
 - Fraser Health – \$1,964,558.
 - The Vancouver Island Health Authority – \$1,539,324.
 - Interior Health – \$1,261,421.
 - Northern Health – \$426,662.
 - The Provincial Health Services Authority – \$624,120.
- The crystal meth funding will be used to develop targeted treatment programs, including individual and group counselling, and recovery support, for methamphetamine users and their families. Programs will target high-risk groups such as youth – particularly those living on the street, and young adults.
- The new funding will bring the total number of addictions treatment beds available in the province up to 1038, with 158 dedicated to youth.
- The Ministry of Health provides over \$1 billion each year for mental health and addictions services.

Tracking Bulk Sales of Meth Precursors

- Meanwhile, B.C. has introduced a new program to more closely monitor bulk sales of cold medications that can be used to make crystal meth.
- Evidence from police agencies, customs and independent research shows that, in B.C., meth labs utilize bulk commercial imports of chemical precursors. They do not currently use off-the-shelf cough syrups and cold pills in large-scale meth production.
- The Province is working with pharmacists and police on a phased approach to cut off a potential source of key ingredients needed to make meth. In the first phase, police, pharmacists and retailers will watch for bulk sales and theft of cold medications. If there is any evidence of misuse of retail products, the Province will restrict the sale of these products to licensed pharmacies. If problems persist, B.C. will make these medications available by prescription only.

For more information on the forums and crystal meth, visit www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/crystalmeth .

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