

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL

TARGET: Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine is a serious hazard for our youth. A highly addictive psychoactive drug, methamphetamine's prolonged use results in severe physical and psychological damage and behavioral abnormalities including an increased tendency towards violence, hallucinations, and paranoia. Children of methamphetamine addicts are exposed to hazardous chemicals, the violent or criminal lifestyle associated with methamphetamine use, and face an increased risk of injury or abuse given an addict's tendency towards violence and paranoia.

Seventy percent of criminal cases in our courts are drug related and 35% are methamphetamine related. Preliminary results from a jail study revealed that among 500 Snohomish County arrestees tested for drugs, 73.58% tested positive for some illicit drug. Of the 500, 19.54% tested positive for methamphetamine compared to 19.47% in Spokane County and 12.78% in King County. Prevention and treatment are necessary to reduce this portion of future jail populations.

Property crime in our county such as shoplifting, break-ins, forgery, fraud, identity theft, and auto theft is often motivated by the need to purchase methamphetamine or other illegal drugs or to obtain chemicals and precursor drugs for the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine use impacts an adult's ability to care for their own basic needs, be responsible parents, maintain healthy relationships and hold a job. As an addict's life deteriorates, crime to support their habit may result in arrest and incarceration. Sanctions imposed for an addict's criminal behavior often result in a loss of children, spouse and job.

Methamphetamine and other illegal drugs pose significant environmental risks and costs. Six pounds of hazardous waste are generated for every pound of methamphetamine manufactured. The waste is frequently dumped on the ground, abandoned, or flushed; creating environmental hazards and increasing environmental clean-up costs. Neighborhood drug houses draw a criminal element into family neighborhoods, exposing all neighbors to an increased risk of crime. Drug houses create a health risk for an entire neighborhood by emitting toxic fumes and the disposal of hazardous substances inappropriately by dumping or flushing can lead to many environmental and public health impacts. Neighborhood drug houses expose our children to individuals with criminal histories and criminal intentions.

The cost to local government from the abuse of methamphetamine and other illegal drugs is significant. Increased law enforcement costs to deal with street crime, neighborhood drug houses, dealers, prosecution, court costs, incarceration, hazardous waste cleanup, the care of dependent children of

addicts and health and social impacts draw resources and revenue away from other public programs.

Methamphetamine supply and demand must be addressed to curb the impact on Snohomish County. To reduce demand, specialized chemical dependency treatment with case management and ancillary services, including psychotropic medication, drug testing, housing, transportation, anger management counseling, domestic violence perpetrator treatment, employment training, and medical and dental care, must be available to addicts to end their addiction.

Demand reduction will require that communities implement effective primary prevention programs to curtail the entry-level use of illegal substances including methamphetamine. Strategies include youth outreach and prevention programs to reduce the risks of young people getting involved with substance abuse, violence, delinquency, school dropouts and teen pregnancy. Without effective prevention programs in communities, the gap between the need for treatment and the available treatment resources will not close.

Snohomish County and partnering cities have jointly funded and staffed a drug taskforce; successfully arresting high-volume drug dealers and abating meth houses in the county.

The Snohomish County Council joins with the Snohomish County Sheriff, Snohomish County Prosecutor, the Snohomish County Clerk, and the Snohomish County Executive to pursue and close drug houses in our neighborhoods; directing their respective personnel to prioritize closing neighborhood drug houses while maintaining a high level of public service to the community as well as directing impacted departments to develop and submit a budget proposal for Council consideration in the 2004 Budget that furthers the county's methamphetamine and other illegal drugs initiative.

The Snohomish County Council recognizes the following significant local efforts to address and reduce the impact of methamphetamine and other illegal drug use on the county; our neighborhoods, businesses, school districts, and residents.

What the County is Currently Doing:

Law Enforcement

Sheriff's Office patrol work is primarily focused on street crime, much of which is perpetrated by individuals addicted to drugs seeking to support their habit as well as individuals seeking to obtain chemicals or precursor drugs to make methamphetamine and other illegal drugs.

The Sheriff's Office Patrol Division has implemented a patrol effort targeted at suspected drug houses as time and personnel resources allow.

The Snohomish County Regional Drug Taskforce targets mid and upper-level drug trafficking organizations (larger volume dealers and generators of drugs) and prosecutes at the federal level when applicable. The Regional Drug Taskforce also aggressively pursues seizure of assets that have been acquired from the proceeds of criminal activity. The Regional Drug Taskforce processes all methamphetamine labs in Snohomish County and assists with labs in Skagit County.

The Snohomish Regional Drug Taskforce provides training for law enforcement, utility companies, private businesses, schools, medical personnel, hospital staff, health care workers, and community groups and has formed partnerships with Drug Court, Prosecutor's Office, Snohomish County Health District, Child Protective Services, National Guard, tribal police, and many other agencies to address the drug problem with a comprehensive approach.

Courts

The Superior Court, in conjunction with the Prosecutor's Office, Department of Human Services, and others has implemented Drug Treatment Courts for adult and juvenile offenders, reducing the frequency of re-offense behavior, and saving both human and financial costs to the county.

The Juvenile Probation Division of the Superior Court provides supervision of substance abusing juvenile offenders adjudicated by the court, including assessment, referral, intervention, monitoring, and imposition of sanctions. This is done in an effort to reduce re-offense behavior, and facilitate positive integration into the community.

Prosecution & Enforcement:

The Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office prosecutes both adults and juveniles for criminal violations of the controlled substances statutes within the bounds of the law.

The Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, in conjunction with the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force, seeks, where appropriate, seizure and forfeiture of controlled substances and the personal and real property used or acquired in connection with controlled substances.

The Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, in conjunction with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force, has implemented a procedure to abate drug houses that are used in connection with controlled substance trafficking.

In coordination with the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force, the Snohomish Health District assesses illegal drug lab sites for contamination and requires approved cleanup for those sites determined to be contaminated.

Treatment to break the cycle:

Publicly funded chemical dependency treatment organizations continue to work to enhance treatment for all addicts, including methamphetamine users. Human Services Division of Alcohol and Other Drugs applied for and received grant funding specific to pilot specialized treatment for methamphetamine addicts. Additionally, the division has sponsored training for chemical dependency counselors with specific treatment techniques for methamphetamine addicts. The division has also collaborated on numerous methamphetamine-related training for Child Protective Services workers, case managers in the welfare system, foster parents, Department of Corrections, law enforcement personnel and the medical field emphasizing chemical dependency treatment as a viable option for methamphetamine addicts.

Prevention and Awareness:

The County provides funding for the presentation of educational information to the public. The presentation includes: 1) how to identify a methamphetamine lab or residue from a lab, 2) how to respond to an identified drug lab, and 3) how to communicate this information to others. In 2002, the Human Services' Division of Alcohol and Other Drugs sponsored 82 of these presentations to a total of 1,488 individuals. The funding continues for 2003 with a target of 75 presentations to 1,500 people.

The Human Services' Division of Alcohol and Other drugs also currently funds mentoring programs, life-skills training for middle-school youth that addresses gateway drugs such as alcohol, tobacco and marijuana, and parenting education programs for parents going through treatment and the general public.

School Districts:

All of the school districts in Snohomish County use one or more strategies or programs that address the prevention of drug use by its students. The most prevalent strategy is having certified chemical dependency counselors at most of the secondary and some of the elementary schools. These counselors provide individual counseling for students who are using alcohol, tobacco, methamphetamine or other drugs, or who live in families where members are involved with substance abuse. After school groups, such as TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use), SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) are available to students at many schools. Some school districts are implementing prevention focused curricula, such as Life Skills Training and Challenge Day as the way to support

students in the prevention of substance abuse. Other strategies include health education which includes substance abuse and prevention information, parenting materials and trainings, and using law enforcement Resource Officers as prevention partners in schools.

Partnering with our local schools: The superintendents of Snohomish County school districts welcome and appreciate the strong stand the County Council is taking against methamphetamine. Superintendents have committed school districts as one of several partners among community coalitions and law enforcement agencies attacking the problem at the local level. Support for the effort would come from a variety of county resources.

What Our Community is Currently Doing:

Citizens For A Safe Snohomish County (CSSC) is a study group of volunteer professionals who advocate for the ordinary citizen. CSSC examines how the criminal justice system and the other components of county government are responding to the methamphetamine crisis. CSSC offers recommendations from its research in public reports, articles and guest editorials. CSSC partners with government to ensure that Snohomish County is a safe place to live and work.

Families for Kids is a group that recruits foster parents for children who are victims of methamphetamine abuse. They provide educational materials and presentations related to becoming a foster parent and receiving respite care, long-term care, and specialized care.

LEAD ON AMERICA (*Law Enforcement Against Drugs in Our Neighborhoods*) provides anti-drug education and instruction to neighborhood families to set up block watches that expedite drug house closure. LOA also educates business owners on drug-related theft; hotel/motel owners on how to identify methamphetamine dealers and cookers and stolen vehicles in parking lots. LOA trains day care owners on how to identify a child exposed to or living in a methamphetamine lab; trains storage companies to identify labs in units and real estate companies to identify homes used as methamphetamine labs and on the importance of protecting gated communities' entrance codes from addicts posing as potential buyers. LOA is alerting emergency room physicians to identify drug use and the symptoms of an innocent living in a methamphetamine lab.

Snohomish County Methamphetamine Action Team was created out of the August 2001 State Methamphetamine Summit. Professionals and volunteers work together against methamphetamine by creating a speaker's bureau on methamphetamine that is educating thousands of people a year. The team also cooperated with the youth of our county to create the nationally-recognized Youth Methamphetamine Summit held May 29, 2002.

Tribal Partnerships Two of the three tribes within Snohomish County work with the Snohomish Regional Drug Taskforce on drug related issues since tribal lands are also suffering the impacts of methamphetamine and other illegal drugs. It is imperative that strong partnerships with the tribes continue to be developed to reduce the impacts of illegal drug use in our communities.

Youth Methamphetamine Summit Planned and produced by youth, May 17, 2003 is the date for the Second Annual Youth Methamphetamine Summit, gathering junior and high school students to focus on education, prevention and treatment.

Community Coalitions Proactive citizens in the cities of Granite Falls, Lake Stevens, Marysville, Monroe, Snohomish, and Sultan are sponsoring awareness programs in various forms to educate the public on methamphetamine and the consequences of its use to our citizens, our children, the environment, the cost to business and the quality of life in Snohomish County.

The plan to close neighborhood drug houses must ensure a timely and effective closure strategy. The plan should increase certainty, predictability, and timeliness in responding to neighborhood drug house activity. The following elements should be strongly considered in development of the plan to close neighborhood drug houses:

Detention Facilities

Open and operate a new facility that can accommodate additional bookings that are likely to be related to an increased emphasis on reducing methamphetamine and other illegal drug use.

Law Enforcement

The County is planning to implement a "Strike Team" concept dedicated to eradicating suspected neighborhood drug houses provided adequate funding can be obtained.

Prosecution & Enforcement

The Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, in coordination with the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force and the Snohomish Health District, is seeking enhanced enforcement of Code violations associated with illegal drug activity in order to close drug houses. In addition, the Prosecutor's Office, in conjunction with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Regional Drug Taskforce, is seeking additional resources to partner with other County agencies such as the Planning and Development Services Code Compliance Division, the Health District, local power and water utilities, and neighborhood groups to more quickly and efficiently close neighborhood drug houses through implementation of coordinated, systematic, and improved abatement procedures.

Probation

There is a need to enhance post-sentencing supervision of adult substance abusing offenders, in order to assure participation in treatment programs, abstinence from drug and alcohol use, compliance with court expectations, and positive integration within the community. The County and State need to work together to assure the post-sentencing supervision occurs.

Treatment

There is \$200,000 for treatment in the 2003 budget and there is a waiting list for treatment. There is a need to expand specialized chemical dependency treatment that is geared specifically to the complex needs of the user (due to the specific drug that the user is addicted to). It is much more cost effective for society to break the cycle of addiction than to continue to pay the revolving door costs of recycling the individual through the criminal justice system.

Education & Prevention

The Administrator of the National Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration stated in November 2002, at a National Prevention Research Conference we would never close the gap between people's need for treatment and the available treatment resources without effective prevention in place in our communities. Council acknowledges that education and prevention are key components to reduce illegal drug use in our community.

Snohomish County recognizes that partnering with our neighborhoods is critical to the success of any effort to close neighborhood drug houses. The County Council calls upon all of our citizens to:

- Be alert to drug use in your house, your neighborhood, your schools, and your community.
- Partner with Law Enforcement by providing prompt, reliable information about drug use to support their investigative efforts.
- Respond to prosecution efforts.
- Support drug treatment programs to return drug abuse offenders to contributing members of society.