

## Survey: Meth use down, thanks to services like NPLeX

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ROCKVILLE, Md. — Methamphetamine use is down by 50%, even as use of illicit drugs continued to climb between 2008 and 2010, according to a national survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that was released last week.

The number of current methamphetamine users decreased from 731,000 people ages 12 years and older (0.3% of the population) in 2006 to 353,000 (0.1%) in 2010.

"News that the number of methamphetamine users across the nation has declined so substantially demonstrates that the real-time, stop-sale system enacted in 19 states is working," the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators wrote in a press release issued Monday. The majority of those states employ the National Precursor Log Exchange, a real-time electronic logging system funded by industry that's used by pharmacies and law enforcement to track sales of over-the-counter pseudoephedrine.

"With only two states having put in place prescription-only mandates, it is clear that electronic technology is stopping criminals from obtaining safe and effective medicines containing pseudoephedrine, which in turn is dramatically dropping the number of meth users," NADDI executive director Charles Cichon said. "As state leaders consider policies that impact the access law-abiding citizens have to popular and reliable medications, they should consider this newly-released data as it validates that a common sense yet effective approach can be implemented to combat meth production and abuse."

Among the survey's other findings was that the majority (55%) of persons ages 12 years and older who had nonmedically used prescription pain relievers in the past 12 months received them from a friend or relative for free. Only 4.4% of those misusing pain relievers in the past year reported getting their supply from a drug dealer, while 0.4% bought it on the Internet.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 22.6 million Americans ages 12 years or older overall (8.9% of the population) were current illicit drug users. The rate of use in 2010 was similar to the rate in 2009 (8.7%) but above the 2008 rate (8%).

An increased rate in the current use of marijuana seems to be one of the prime factors in the overall rise in illicit drug use, SAMHSA said.

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