



# Tennessee Alliance for Drug Endangered Children Newsletter

## MISSION

**Increase training and on-going educational opportunities regarding issues faced by drug endangered children and their families. This includes prevention, recognition, response, intervention, and follow up for the public and private sectors responsible for the care of children.**

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Issue 1

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*From the Desk of Chair Betsy Dunn . . .*

*The Beginnings.* As with the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, our beginnings came from the huge methamphetamine problem communities across the Nation and in Tennessee were experiencing. The emphasis in late 2005 and early 2006 was on protecting children from the dangers of being exposed to methamphetamine environments. It soon became apparent that meth is not the only drug which has a negative impact on children and our mission statement acknowledges that.



In late 2006, the Tennessee Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (TADEC) became the first state Alliance to host the national Drug Endangered Children Conference. Held in Nashville, the conference was attended by 300+ from over two dozen states. Significantly, during the conference, the Tennessee Legislature passed the *Meth Free Tennessee Act*.

The conference Keynote Speaker, Governor Phil Bredesen, culminated his address by announcing this legislation and signing into law the *Meth Free Tennessee Act*.

*Protocols.* Since that time, one of the primary focuses of the Alliance has been to provide training in judicial districts across the state on the formation of standards or protocols to deal with the growing meth problem. At these meetings, the Alliance has challenged the community leaders to adopt formal protocols that fit the dynamics of their respective communities.

The Alliance has provided this training in 25 of 31 Judicial Districts in Tennessee with several jurisdictions having already established protocols to handle meth cases where children are involved.

*Cost of Meth-Related Foster Care in Tennessee.* In 2009, over 280 children were placed into foster care by DCS for meth-related incidents. That number almost doubled to 484 in 2010. With the average foster care stay at 365 days and a cost of around \$106 per day, meth-related cases accounted for \$18 million (2.83%) of the DCS annual budget of \$664 million.

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*Betsy Dunn, Chair of the TADEC, has been a Child Protective Services Case Manager for DCS for 21 years. In 2005, Betsy was honored by being invited to Washington to testify before a Congressional Committee about her experiences with children and meth-related abuse.*

## 2010 - A RISE IN METH LAB INCIDENTS IN TENNESSEE

The 2,082 Meth Lab Seizures in Tennessee during 2010 surpassed the previous record of 1,559 by over 520 labs! The prior record was achieved in 2004, before the *Meth Free Tennessee Act* and *Combat Meth Act* were passed on state and federal levels. There have been 11,149 meth lab seizures in Tennessee since 1999!

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other law enforcement sources, states across the country are experiencing similar or more substantial increases in the number of meth lab seizure incidents reported by law enforcement. State records indicate that Missouri, Tennessee, and Indiana take the top slots for the most meth lab seizure incidents in 2010.

The rise in meth lab seizure incidents in Tennessee is attributable primarily to an increase in the small one-pot labs. This manufacturing method is commonly referred to as "Shake and Bake." This relatively new and simple method of production currently accounts for approximately 60% of all meth lab seizures in Tennessee. The benefits to this method of production for meth cookers are:

- Smaller amounts of meth precursor (pseudoephedrine/ephedrine) needed
- Faster cook time
- Less chemicals and equipment are required
- Greater mobility of the lab.

While all meth production methods are dangerous, in recent one-pot studies conducted by Network Environmental

Systems, DEA, and the Michigan State Police, often manufacturing attempts utilizing this method fail and result in fire or explosion. One example of this danger was a meth addict who stopped on the side of the road in Lauderdale County, attempting to manufacture meth, when the one-pot exploded. The explosion resulted in the cook being hospitalized with serious burns and a dismembered arm. It is reported that five days after being released from the hospital, law enforcement arrested this meth cooker for a second attempt to manufacture meth.

Because of the smaller amounts of precursors needed, the one-pot method provides for an easier route to obtain the pseudoephedrine/ephedrine precursor necessary to make meth. Individuals and criminal groups are increasingly circumventing state and federal precursor sales restrictions by making numerous small-quantity precursor product purchases from multiple retail outlets. This practice is widely referred to as "smurfing" and has become a



lucrative commerce for another criminal element within the meth manufacturing process.

Although law enforcement in Tennessee has been ever vigilant in their on-going battle against methamphetamine, these increases due to the one-pot method and "smurfing" prove that the only way to combat this escalation in meth labs is through amending the laws

of Tennessee to make pseudoephedrine/ephedrine a prescription-only drug. This is currently a priority of the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force on behalf of law enforcement who endeavor to protect the citizens of Tennessee.

Unfortunately it appears that established criminal activities and methods will result in continued high seizure rates in Tennessee in 2011. Current projections are for the number of meth lab related seizures in 2011 to exceed 2,300.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Tommy Farmer**, an Assistant Special Agent in Charge with the TBI, is the State Director of the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force.

Find out more about the Task Force at [www.rid-meth.org](http://www.rid-meth.org) or you can reach Tommy by email at: [thomas.farmer@tn.gov](mailto:thomas.farmer@tn.gov)



**If You Cook It  
We Will Come**

## Meth Creates Heavy Financial Burden for States

Article from Sunday, 30 January 2011, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*

by Joy Lukachick



As debate continues over how to tackle the Southeast's increasing number of meth labs, authorities agree on one thing -- the drug is depleting Tennessee's financial resources. Officials estimate that one man cost the state \$1.5 million after a meth lab he is charged with operating exploded.

Mark Buckner was airlifted to the Vanderbilt University Regional Burn Center for four months of treatment after a meth explosion in October 2009, said Tommy Farmer, director of the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force. The uninsured McMinn County man's bill went up at the rate of \$10,000 a day -- it cost \$1 million to heal the burns covering his face and body, Farmer said. Almost a year later, police found Buckner making meth again, Farmer said. Buckner was indicted and, if convicted, faces a 10-year prison sentence. The cost for prosecution and imprisonment could add up to about \$500,000, he said. Local police estimate there are hundreds of similar cases.

A Rand Corp. study released in 2009 estimated that the overall cost of meth to the nation was \$23 billion in 2005.

When police discover a meth lab, it takes at least four hours to clean it up, said Lt. Van Hinton with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Investigators have to secure an area, book suspects in jail and wait for a clean-up crew to take care of the lab, he said. "It can be overwhelming for any department," Hinton said. Farmer said each meth lab costs the state between \$2,000 and \$3,500 to clean.

Also, meth cases are among the most expensive to prosecute, said Scott Burns, National District Attorneys Association executive director. "It's a lot more complicated, time-consuming and expensive," he said. "You have to deal with toxic and dangerous chemicals." In other criminal cases the evidence may be a gun or a knife, but with meth cases all the contents seized at a lab scene have to be documented and then properly destroyed, Burns said.

Aside from the monetary cost, the drug also affects families, said Catherine Schueman, site manager for Highland Rivers Treatment Services in Calhoun, Ga. Georgia Division of Family and Children Services records showed 484 children were taken into protective custody in meth-related cases in 2010, The Associated Press reported. Schueman said she sees children forced from homes where parents have been caught cooking meth. And she works with young teenagers who became addicted to meth after their parents became users, she said.

"I get to see the children going from foster home to foster home," Schueman said. "Kids end up living with grandmother if they're lucky." Contact Joy Lukachick at [jlukachick@timesfreepress.com](mailto:jlukachick@timesfreepress.com) or 423-757-6659.

### Social Costs of Methamphetamine in the United States in 2005 (\$ millions)

NOTE: Due to rounding, numbers may not sum precisely.

| Cost                        | Lower Bound     | Best Estimate   | Upper Bound     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Drug Treatment              | 299.4           | 545.5           | 1,079.9         |
| Health Care                 | 116.3           | 351.3           | 611.2           |
| Intangibles/Premature Death | 12,513.7        | 16,624.9        | 28,548.6        |
| Productivity                | 379.4           | 687.0           | 1,054.9         |
| Crime and Criminal Justice  | 2,578.0         | 4,209.8         | 15,740.9        |
| Child Endangerment          | 311.9           | 904.6           | 1,165.7         |
| Production/Environment      | 38.6            | 61.4            | 88.7            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>16,237.3</b> | <b>23,384.4</b> | <b>48,280.9</b> |

Rand Corporation Study, 2009, *The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States, 2005*.

## UPCOMING TRAINING/CONFERENCES

### 10th Annual National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children Conference

September 14-15, 2011

Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center

Washington, DC Area



This three-day event provides training on the latest research and best practice for Drug Endangered Children efforts at the community, state, and federal level. The conference will include topics related to child welfare, environmental health, medical, prevention, the judiciary and drug courts, substance abuse and mental health.

### 8th Annual Tennessee Connecting for Children's Justice Conference

November 21-22, 2011  
Location TBA



The annual conference provides interdisciplinary education to support professional excellence in the field of child maltreatment by offering diverse beginner, intermediate and advanced workshops with special concentrated tracks for law enforcement, attorneys, medical personnel, CAC staff, therapists, prevention, case managers, and more. **Do not miss this excellent opportunity to network with professionals from across the state and increase your knowledge on recent research affecting child welfare.**

Tennessee Alliance  
For Drug Endangered  
Children Website  
[www.tadec.org](http://www.tadec.org)

We welcome your suggestions for future issues and topics for the *TADEC Newsletter*. Please provide suggestions/changes/additions to the Board and Newsletter Committee by emailing [debbie.maberry@13thdtf.com](mailto:debbie.maberry@13thdtf.com).

### Helpful Websites

[www.tadec.org](http://www.tadec.org)

[www.nationaldec.org](http://www.nationaldec.org)

[www.cadcat.org](http://www.cadcat.org)

[www.methfreetn.org](http://www.methfreetn.org)

[www.rid-meth.org](http://www.rid-meth.org)

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**Drug Endangered  
Children . . . Are those  
children who suffer  
physical or psychological  
harm or neglect resulting  
from exposure to illegal  
drugs or persons under  
the influence of illegal  
drugs or exposure to  
dangerous environments**

