

Methamphetamine Crisis: The Impact on Law Enforcement, Crime, Social Services, and the Environment

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Methamphetamine, a powerful stimulant that dramatically affects the central nervous system, is America's new drug of choice. According to a national survey on drug use and health, more than 12.3 million Americans have tried methamphetamine. Clandestine labs have been located in all fifty states, and the number of labs discovered has doubled over the past five years. Methamphetamine usage is reaching epidemic proportion and is causing a financial burden to many local, county, and state law enforcement agencies. The problem does not end there, but also impacts government budgets, welfare, hospitals, and many other entities. This research paper will provide an overview of methamphetamine and briefly examine the state of Arkansas, a state with one of the highest methamphetamine usage rates in the country. It will examine the impact on crime throughout the country, impact on health care and social services, impact on the environment, and the impact on the agencies that fight the battle. This paper will also look at the programs and preventive measures in place, and see which ones are working, and which ones seem to have no effect on the problem. Currently, Florida is not listed in the top five states of methamphetamine abuse, but it is steadily climbing toward the top. Strategies utilized by other states to combat the methamphetamine crisis should provide some insight on what Florida needs to do to stay out of the top five in statistical analysis.