

Terry E. Branstad

Governor

Kim Reynolds

Lt. Governor



Department of Public Safety

Roxann M. Ryan

Commissioner

Senate Committee Judiciary Hearing

“The New Era in the Fight Against Methamphetamine in Iowa”

Paul Feddersen
Assistant Director- Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement
Des Moines, IA

October 13, 2015
10:00 a.m.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the State of Iowa and the Iowa Department of Public Safety Division of Narcotics Enforcement to speak about the fight against methamphetamine in Iowa. My name is Paul Feddersen and I currently serve as the Assistant Director of the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement. I have been in law enforcement for 21 years with the majority of it in the field of narcotics investigations.

Domestic manufacturing of methamphetamine in Iowa remains a threat. State and local methamphetamine clandestine laboratory responses up to this date for CY 2015 are approximately 113. This is a significant decline since the peak in 2004 where there were approximately 1,500 annually. In 2005, the Iowa Legislature passed legislation limiting the availability of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient in the illegal manufacture of methamphetamine. Congress followed shortly after with similar pseudoephedrine purchase restrictions.

Currently the prevalence of methamphetamine labs is the emergence of “one-pot” cooks. These methods generally use less pseudoephedrine and produce methamphetamine in smaller quantities, but are no less dangerous than other production methods. Toxic chemicals, fires, and explosions are significant health and safety risks associated with these methods. The remnants can easily be transported in a vehicle and disposed of in neighborhoods and ditches. Aside from its environmental impact, serious hazards exist for children who come in contact with the waste or families impacted by flash fires from these cooks. The bulk of the labs reported by Iowa law enforcement in recent years have been the “one-pot” labs.

DIVISION OF NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT • 215 EAST 7TH STREET • DES MOINES, IOWA 50319-0049 • 515-725-6300

Integrity, Fairness, Respect, Honesty, Courage, Compassion, Service

The average cost of a COPS-funded clandestine laboratory clean-up by a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) hazardous waste contractor nationwide is now approximately \$2,700 per laboratory. There are hidden costs, as well. For example, state and local law enforcement agencies that seize laboratories must leave personnel on site until the laboratory is cleaned up, often resulting in overtime expenses and lost productivity in other areas.

To assist our local law enforcement partners with the financial burden of the cleanup of clandestine laboratories, in 2014 the Iowa Department of Public Safety Division of Narcotics Enforcement implemented the DEA's Authorized Central Storage or "Container" Program. This program is sponsored by DEA and allows trained/certified law enforcement officers to remove gross contamination (chemicals, solvents, glassware, etc.) from clandestine laboratory sites, safely package the waste pursuant to Federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and transport it to a secure storage container where it is stored until a qualified hazardous waste contractor can remove it for disposal. The DEA provides the storage containers, safety equipment and cleanup materials at no cost to Iowa law enforcement. The Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement coordinated this program and has partnered with local law enforcement agencies to strategically place five of these containers on law enforcement controlled properties throughout Iowa. This program is very effective in saving local law enforcement time and money in the cleanup of methamphetamine laboratories.

Although domestic manufacturing of methamphetamine remains a threat, the majority of the methamphetamine is clandestinely produced in Mexico and smuggled across the Southwest Border. Major drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) are undoubtedly the largest contributing factor to the supply of methamphetamine in the state of Iowa. Mexican DTOs are the primary organizational threat to the state of Iowa. They are responsible for the management of sophisticated smuggling, transportation, and distribution networks for methamphetamine in not only Iowa, but throughout the US.

The Iowa Department of Public Safety's Division of Narcotics Enforcement has experienced a significant increase in major cases involving large quantities (multiple kilo purchases/seizures) of purer and more potent methamphetamine smuggled into Iowa from Mexico and other states. The Division of Narcotics Enforcement is on course this year to seize double the amount of methamphetamine that was seized last year. The most recent report from the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigations Crime Lab reports the average purity level of methamphetamine confiscated in Iowa to be 98%. That compares with an average purity level ranging from 14% to 40% ten years ago.

With the large quantities of high purity methamphetamine flooding Iowa there has been a significant decrease in the price of methamphetamine. In 2009 one pound of methamphetamine could cost anywhere from \$27,000 to \$32,000. Today the price for one pound of methamphetamine is \$10,000 to \$14,000.

The state of Iowa sits in the heart of the Midwest crisscrossed by Interstates 80 and 35, which connect the east and west coastal regions of the United States and provides an international corridor for drug importation and distribution for DTOs. A recent example of

this is a Trooper with the Iowa State Patrol was conducting traffic enforcement on the interstate system and recovered approximately 37 pounds of methamphetamine.

The Division of Narcotics Enforcement and the local drug task forces in Iowa have also identified drug endangered children as a priority. Officers have received Drug Endangered Children (DEC) training, and most task forces have implemented formal multijurisdictional DEC teams. The DEC teams incorporate the principles of substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment, child protection, prosecution, and drug enforcement to protect children from drug users, dealers and manufacturers. The DEC program, coordinated by the Office of Drug Control Policy, features law enforcement officers working side-by-side with DHS caseworkers, prosecutors, court officials and health care providers toward a common goal: protecting children. The DEC model is being adopted by Iowa communities, helping interested entities and stakeholders join together as a safety net for children and a way of encouraging custodial parents to deal with their addictions so that families can be reunited in healthy ways.

The Division of Narcotics Enforcement actively promotes joint cooperative investigations that often cross jurisdictional lines. Experience clearly demonstrates combining the knowledge, expertise, and resources of many agencies and jurisdictions are the most effective and cost-efficient methods of conducting large-scale investigations of major traffickers.