



HEALTH ALLIANCE: BRIDGE TO ADVANCED HEALING

## IDAHO METH PROJECT®

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### **Media Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 5, 2009**

**Health Alliance, Idaho Meth Project will host family forums about meth  
*Hospitals, program aim to foster open dialogue about dangerous drug***

**TREASURE VALLEY, Idaho** – To help ensure local youth don't try meth – "Not Even Once" – The Saint Alphonus - West Valley Health Alliance and the Idaho Meth Project are putting on two nights of Free Family Forums for Parents, 'Tweens and Teens on Jan. 20 and 21.

The local audiences will hear valuable information from law enforcement officials and an Idahoan with up-close-and-personal knowledge of this dangerous drug's effects.

Further, attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions that will be addressed at the end of the each forum by a panel featuring the speakers along with health care experts.

The forums are designed to foster conversations between parents and children – creating open dialogue about the negative impact of meth abuse.

“As Caldwell’s Community Hospital, West Valley Medical Center is striving to educate local residents about the health dangers of using this destructive drug and the devastation it causes the whole community,” WVMC CEO Kathy Moore said. “We hope this event will serve as the beginnings of attacking this epidemic and eliminating the use of this drug.”

“Meth is the most addictive substance known to man – that is why the ‘Not Even Once’ message is so important,” said Megan Ronk, executive director of the Idaho Meth Project. “Unfortunately, meth has affected countless families throughout our state, but together we can ensure that the next generation of Idahoans makes the choice to remain meth free.”

Saint Alphonsus Interim President and CEO Janelle Reilly said, “We see the devastating effects that meth causes in our emergency room, to babies born to meth mothers, and in our mental health program. It impacts not only those patients, but families who must care and cope with this terrible addiction. We’re proud to sponsor this forum to show families the reality of what’s at stake and further education through discussion in the home.”

## **When and Where**

The event will take place from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Jan. 20 at Centennial High School in Meridian. The Jan. 21 forum will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Caldwell High School. Due to content, the organizers ask that no children younger than 10 attend.

## **The Speakers**

**Shelley Mitchell** – a mother who also is a former meth addict, cooker and dealer – will speak both nights. She will tell the sobering story of how she went from honor student, to meth user, to meth addict, to wife and mother of four, to inmate, to burn victim to rehabilitated member of society.

Mitchell will detail the pain and separation that meth caused her family, as well as the amount of work it required for her and her husband to escape the grasp of addiction.

**Monte Stiles**, assistant U.S. Attorney for Idaho, will speak at the Meridian forum.

Stiles has extensive experience in the war on drugs. In 1987 he was hired by the U.S. Attorney’s Office to run the federal Organized Crime/Drug Enforcement Task Force. He also worked for a short time as Special Counsel to the Director of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys.

As a federal prosecutor for many years, he has worked with various agencies to investigate and prosecute major drug traffickers.

Most recently Stiles helped spearhead the statewide “Enough is Enough” anti-drug campaign. Community coalitions were formed throughout Idaho that included businesses, civic groups, churches, schools, youth volunteer organizations, government and media.

**Dana Schuck** of the Canyon County Sheriff’s Office will speak at the Caldwell forum.

Schuck has been a substance abuse educator with the Sheriff's Office for three years. He leads support groups for inmates at the Canyon County Jail, using material made for high schools. He said his personal mission statement is "to inspire, support and promote self-worth, significance and wholeness in other people."

Shuck also works with a trainer from Probation and Parole; together they facilitate "Meth Matrix" classes, which focus on relapse prevention.

## The Numbers

The results of the Idaho Meth Project's "Idaho Baseline Meth Use & Attitudes Survey," conducted in the fall of 2007, may surprise some parents and highlight the need for increased knowledge and understanding about the negative implications of meth abuse:

- 45 percent of young adults and 30 percent of teens report it would be "very" or "somewhat easy" for them to acquire meth.
- One in five Idaho teens sees little to no risk in trying meth once or twice.
- As many as 38 percent of young adults and 25 percent of teens believe they will benefit from meth use.
- 30 percent of young adults and 14 percent of teens say someone has offered them meth or tried to get them to try it.
- Of those who have used meth, 19 percent report their first use occurred when they were 12 or under, while 10 percent report being less than 10 years old.

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*West Valley Medical Center, Caldwell's community hospital, is one of the leading hospital facilities and employers in the state of Idaho. West Valley is dedicated to providing high-quality, cost-effective health care to Treasure Valley residents. This 150-bed facility is nationally accredited and has been part of the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) family since 1975. For more information about West Valley Medical Center, please see [www.westvalleymedctr.com](http://www.westvalleymedctr.com) <<http://www.westvalleymedctr.com>>.*

*HCA, which has about 190,000 employees, is one of the nation's leading providers of healthcare services, composed of locally managed facilities that include approximately 180 hospitals and more than 90 outpatient surgery centers in 22 states, England and Switzerland. All references to "HCA" and the "company" contained in this press release refer to HCA and its affiliates. The term "facilities" refers to entities owned or operated by subsidiaries or affiliates of HCA.*

*Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center is a 387-licensed-bed regional medical center serving people throughout the Northwest. Saint Alphonsus emphasizes care that is patient-centered, innovative and community based. Saint Alphonsus focuses on providing services in a spiritual, healing environment, and is renowned for its state-of-the-art digital environment and pioneering technologies; award-winning clinical services; a nationally accredited Life Flight program and the region's Trauma Center. For information about Saint Alphonsus visit [www.saintalphonsus.org](http://www.saintalphonsus.org).*

*Idaho Meth Project is a nonprofit organization that implements a range of advertising and community action programs to reduce methamphetamine use in the state. Launched in January 2008, the Idaho Meth Project leverages a proven model that combines extensive research with a hard-hitting, integrated media campaign. The Idaho Meth Project is affiliated with the Meth Project, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing first-time meth use through public service messaging, public policy and community outreach. For more information, visit [www.idahomethproject.org](http://www.idahomethproject.org).*