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Hospitals battle meth

BOISE — The Idaho Hospital Association joined Gov. Butch Otter on Friday to announce a contribution of \$100,000 to the Idaho Meth Project. The association, which includes 44 Idaho community hospitals, is committed to eradicating meth from our state.

“Meth is the health care plague of our time. Idaho hospitals see the medical wreckage every day in our ER’s, our NICU’s, and our behavioral health centers. But just as we are uniquely positioned to witness the devastation, we are also uniquely positioned to help turn the tide. And that’s exactly what hospitals across Idaho plan to do,” said Doug Crabtree, CEO for Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center and Chairman-elect of the Idaho Hospital Association.

“The whole idea of the Idaho Meth Project,” Otter said, “is coordinating and leveraging public and private partnerships to make the best use of our resources in the fight against this deadly drug. I couldn’t be more pleased that folks like the Idaho Hospital Association are stepping up to this challenge. They know we’re all in this together.”

Idaho ranks 5th in the nation for per capita meth use, a position which was, until recently, held by Montana. Just two years after implementing the project on a statewide basis, Montana is 39th in the nation for per capita meth use. Aggressive ads portraying the real effects of meth are just one portion of the overall plan. Research on meth use and attitudes surrounding meth were recently completed and the results are expected in early 2008. The results will serve as a benchmark prior to the statewide release of billboard, radio, television, and print ads.

“Methamphetamine is killing people and shattering lives,” said Sandra Bruce, President and CEO for Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center. “Meth use has increased in the West more than anywhere else in the United States. Among many populations, it is even surpassing alcohol abuse.”

In addition to St. Luke’s and Saint Alphonsus, IHA member hospitals in the Treasure Valley area include: Idaho Elks Rehabilitation Hospital, Intermountain Hospital, Mercy Medical Center, West Valley Medical Center, Walter Know Memorial Hospital, and Weiser Memorial Hospital.