

Meth ad campaign showing results

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The Idaho Meth Project, pleased with survey results showing more teens now believe it's risky to use the drug, is launching the second wave of its bare-knuckles ad campaign.

The ads continue to be blunt and graphic. The themes are similar to the first wave of TV and radio spots, basically telling teens and young adults that the drug is highly addictive, and getting hooked results in terrible consequences.

Meth has been a major problem for Idaho. Battling it is something that must be done on many fronts. The Idaho Legislature took a large step in that direction a few years ago when it passed a law that restricts the sale of cold medications that contain pseudoephedrine, a major ingredient in meth. Now local meth cooks can't buy large amounts of what they need to produce large quantities.

But Idaho still gets a lot of its meth from out of the area. Drug enforcers recently uncovered a major pipeline from Mexico, and major busts like that one, plus the law restricting the sale of cold medicine, have lowered the supply in the area.

Yes, the war against drugs is always helped by a reduction in supply. But the real key to ultimate victory is in the reduction — and eventually, the virtual elimination — of demand. That's why efforts like the Idaho Meth Project are so important.

Campaign organizers point out a five percentage-point increase since 2007 in the number of teens who say there is a great or moderate risk in trying the drug (82 percent now say that). But at the same time, one in four believe that using the drug will help them lose weight, and one in five say using it will make them feel happy.

Vanity and good feelings are very important things to teens. Convincing them that meth ultimately leads away from those goals, while at the same time producing horrible side effects, is the most effective way to keep them away from dealers.

The survey showed a 13 percentage point increase (up to 61 percent) in the number of teens who said meth use would lead to tooth decay. That's a good start. The more the campaign can target what's important to kids and show them how drug use takes them away from that, the more effective the campaign will be.