

May 21, 2007

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM OREGON
PARTNERSHIP*****

Contact: Pete Schulberg, Kaleen Deatherage
503-244-5211

OREGON PARTNERSHIP LAUDS DRAMATIC DISAPPEARANCE OF METH LABS IN STATE!

2007 Stats Show Remarkable Progress Following New Rules on Pseudoephedrine Sales – The Strongest in the Nation.

(Portland, Or) Progress has been quick and effective in efforts to wipe out methamphetamine labs in Oregon as the fight against the meth crisis continues on other fronts.

Oregon Partnership, a statewide nonprofit providing alcohol and drug prevention education, has been a supporter of legislation that has helped limit the ingredients to manufacture meth.

For the first four months of 2007, law enforcement agencies have reported only three known methamphetamine labs in the state – a dramatic drop that can be attributed to a new law requiring doctors' prescriptions for pseudoephedrine.

For the month of April, not a single meth lab was identified, according to statistics from the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Narcotics

Enforcement Association. That compares to only three labs in the months of January, February and March.

“We owe tremendous thanks and credit to the people of Oregon who recognized the serious problem that meth labs created and were willing to accept the inconvenience of pseudoephedrine only by prescription,” said Oregon Partnership’s Kaleen Deatherage, a member of the Governor’s Meth Task Force. “This was a way to protect Oregon’s children, families and neighborhoods.

Meth lab busts in Oregon dropped to 63 in 2006, down from 473 labs seized in 2003. Rules passed by the Oregon Legislature requiring pseudoephedrine products be placed behind pharmacy counters, and later, legislation mandating a prescription for them has reduced the danger that the labs pose to children, neighborhoods and the environment.

The socio-economic impact of one meth lab is \$350,000. Prior to the laws on pseudoephedrine sales, Oregon law enforcement was taking down an average of 40 meth labs per month.

While labs are being virtually wiped out in the state, deaths from meth use continue to rise, fueled by meth shipments from Mexico. Experts agree that the meth problem – or any drug problem – requires prevention and treatment along with law enforcement.

Unfortunately, prevention and treatment have been decimated by years of budget cuts. With additional money now available to the Oregon Legislature, Oregon Partnership believes it is critical that priority be given to restore those cuts.

“We cannot curb the meth epidemic without a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, education, law enforcement and treatment,” says Pam Erickson, Oregon Partnership deputy director.

Prevention and treatment return 10-fold on their investment by reducing costs of health care, social services and and law enforcement.

References:

Tri-county and state data

<http://www.carsacoalition.org/files/Labbusts2.XLS>

State data and detailed information on meth laws

<http://www.oregondec.org/OregonMethLabStats.pdf>

Policy paper on rebuilding the State's prevention and treatment infrastructure

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/publications/07-09businessplan.pdf>

Pete Schulberg

Communications Director

Oregon Partnership

Dir - 971-244-1375

Cell - 503-502-5369

www.orpartnership.org