

Nevada Legislative Subcommittee on Health Care
Methamphetamine in Washoe County
Testimony Prepared and Submitted by Kevin Quint, Executive Director
Join Together Northern Nevada
“A Community Partnership Against Substance Abuse”

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Kevin Quint. I serve as the Executive Director of Join Together Northern Nevada, a community anti-drug coalition in Washoe County. I am here to testify to you on issues pertaining to methamphetamine in Washoe County.

You’ve already heard from Dr. Chervenak about the signs, symptoms, effects, and consequences of methamphetamine. I’d like to talk about efforts to stem the tide of that drug in Washoe County.

First, here are some startling facts for you:

- 5% of Washoe County middle school students report using methamphetamine in their lifetime. (2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey or YRBS)
- 10.2% of Washoe County high school students report using methamphetamine in their lifetime. (2005 YRBS)
- 16.2% of Nevada’s high school girls reported using meth in their lifetime. (2003 YRBS)
- Nevada’s high school usage rate of methamphetamine is well above the national average. (2005 YRBS)
- Over 500 county law enforcement agencies across the nation reported in 2005 that methamphetamine is their primary drug problem. (Center for Substance Abuse Research or CESAR, University of Maryland, 2005)
- In Washoe County 80-85% of people in drug court are there for methamphetamine. (Washoe County Drug Court)
- Finally, methamphetamine was the reason for admission to Nevada’s publicly funded treatment programs for 30% of adults seeking admission, 26% of adolescents seeking admission, and 26% of pregnant women seeking admission. (BADA Annual Report, 2004)

In Washoe County, we want to make a case for the fact that there is a serious methamphetamine problem in our community. We want the community to take action to address this growing and serious problem. But we also want to put a face on this issue.

In order to do this, we have started a partnership called the Meth Community Response Alliance. The Alliance began meeting in September 2005 and is highly representative of the community with over 30 agencies and dozens of individuals becoming part of the effort. Please see the attached sheet with a full listing of agencies and groups who are involved in the Alliance.

From the very beginning, the group agreed that we need to develop data on the problem, educate the community about methamphetamine and its dangers, and mobilize the community to address the problem effectively. To do this the Alliance meets on the

second Wednesday of the month for a general meeting. We also have three working subcommittees, which include

- Media Committee
- Summit Committee
- Resource Development Committee

During March we are holding four town hall meetings to raise awareness about Methamphetamine in the Washoe County community. The dates and topics are as follows:

- March 2: Overview of the Problem (Kevin Quint, JTNN)
- March 9: Children and Youth Issues (Panel of youth and CPS specialists)
- March 14: Medical Aspects of Methamphetamine (Carol Chervenak, MD)
- March 23: Methamphetamines and the Environment (Mark Snyder, DEA)

Each meeting in March includes a 30 to 45 minute presentation followed by question, answer, and discussion. The first meeting, held on March 2, was attended by about 90 participants, including judges, drug court professionals, counselors, law enforcement officers, people in treatment, people in recovery, social workers, nurses, and more.

After our meetings in March, we are planning to compile all of the information and comments from the meetings and use that information as a roadmap to talk with policy makers about how best to address meth in the community. This process will culminate in a policy summit that is set for Friday April 28 in which local politicians, leaders, and people in office will be invited to a day of discussing the meth problem and how best to proceed in addressing it. After the Summit in late April, our goal is to have a working plan in place for Washoe County that includes buy-in from all of the major leaders in the community.

Finally, the Washoe County based Meth Community Response Alliance is only one of many other coalitions across the state that is working on this problem. We are working or plan to work with other coalitions across the state so that we can develop a statewide strategy to reduce and eventually eliminate the impact of methamphetamine in our great state.

As we move forward in our work in Washoe County, we are aware of several gaps. These include:

- Treatment on demand
- Comprehensive prevention services and programs
- Brief screening and intervention
- Comprehensive laws that address various issues pertaining to Methamphetamine

We have an opportunity to work on this problem now while it is still developing in our community. If we wait much longer, we will be faced with at much more serious and deep problem.

Thank you.

**Washoe County
Meth Community Response Alliance
Participant Roster
March 7, 2006**

The Washoe County based Meth Community Response Alliance has 30 agencies represented at the table with about 75 individuals participating.

- American Lung Association
- Bristlecone Family Services
- Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Frontier Recovery Network
- High Sierra AHEC
- Join Together Northern Nevada
- Nevada Bureau of Family Health Services, Children with Special Health Care Needs
- Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, Office of Juvenile Justice
- Nevada Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services
- Northeast Reno Weed and Seed
- Northern Nevada DUI Task Force
- Project Care
- Reno Police Department
- Sparks Fire Department
- Sparks Police Department
- Reno Sparks Indian Colony
- Ridge House
- Second Judicial District Court
- Step 2
- University of Nevada, Reno Police Department
- Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services
- Washoe County Family Court
- Washoe County Health Department
- Washoe County Public Defenders Office
- Washoe County School District
- Washoe County Sheriff's Office
- Washoe County Social Services
- Private citizens

Meth Use in Our County and State

- **5% of Washoe County middle school students report using meth in their lifetime.**
- **10.2% of Washoe County high school students report using meth in their lifetime.**
- **16.2% of Nevada high school girls report using meth in their lifetime.**
- **Nevada high school students' usage rate of meth is 1.6 times the national average.**
- **Over 500 county law enforcement agencies in the U.S. reported that meth is their primary drug problem.**
- **Meth was the reason for admission to Nevada's publicly funded treatment programs for:**
 - **30% of adults**
 - **26% of adolescents**
 - **26% of pregnant women**