

## *Missouri's new law credited with decreasing levels of meth production*

---

JEFFERSON CITY— It is one thing to pass a law with good intentions. It is quite another to see those good intentions pay off. This past session, the state Legislature passed legislation aimed at curbing the production of methamphetamine, the prevalence of which has reached epidemic proportions in the Show-Me State. In fact, Missouri is a national leader in the production of this dangerous drug.

Judging from the significant decrease in meth-related incidents since the comprehensive meth bill was signed into law in July, the legislation is beginning to work.

Earlier this week, the governor reported findings from the Missouri Highway Patrol that show the worth of our efforts to combat meth use and abuse. The numbers reveal that this August, there was a 55-percent reduction in meth-related incidents as compared to August of 2004. This marks important progress in our mission to cut off meth cooks' access to the key ingredients in making the highly addictive drug. We have restricted the sale of over-the-counter dry-tablet medicines containing pseudoephedrine, which can now only be purchased from pharmacists or certified technicians, and no more than nine grams of the medicine can be bought within a 30-day period.

To purchase the pills, customers must show ID, and their name is then logged in a database, which the police can access. The Highway Patrol reports that this portion of the new law is helping in alerting law enforcement agencies of potential meth cooks.

Although there are other states in the process of mirroring Missouri's laws, the war against meth cannot be won without a nation-wide effort. U.S. Sen. Jim Talent is calling for a federal law called the Combat Meth Act, which, similar to current Missouri law, would move cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine behind the counter and limit how much one person can buy to 7.5 grams a month. It is the most comprehensive anti-meth measure ever considered by Congress, and because it would be a federal law if passed, it would bring all 50 states up to date with Missouri and provide a more uniform front in the battle to shut down homegrown meth labs.

It is my hope that through joint efforts at both the state and federal levels we can finally get a grip on the meth epidemic in Missouri. The "Show Me" State has much to boast about but being the nation's leader in meth production is a distinction we do not need.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

###