

Don't Meth With Texas

8/06/2005

It has been one month since the state passed new laws restricting the sales and purchasing procedures of over-the-counter drugs containing of pseudoephedrine. Here's a look at the new laws.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry recently signed two pieces of legislation aimed at reducing methamphetamine use and production in Texas.

“Methamphetamine is spreading like a plague across Texas, endangering thousands of lives and the safety of our neighborhoods,” Perry said at the public signing of the bills. “These new laws will make it harder for drug dealers to poison our citizens, empower Texans to take a more active role in combating meth use, and protect innocent children exposed to this dangerous drug.”

According to the Texas Dept. of Public Safety, meth lab seizures have quadrupled in recent years. The number of meth users entering treatment centers in Texas has increased from 1,800 in 2000 to 11,200 last year – a six-fold increase.

A break down of the law

Consumers searching for certain over-the-counter decongestants may not find them so easily on store shelves anymore.

The law's retail sales guidelines require any store that carries pseudoephedrine-based products to place the products behind sales counters or in locked cabinets. These drugs are primary ingredients in the manufacturing of methamphetamine.

To purchase these drugs, customers must now request the drug from a sales clerk with access to the product.

Examples of products to which the law applies include Tylenol Sinus, Sudafed, Claritin-D, Advil Sinus, Alka-Seltzer Cold, Coricidin Cough & Cold, and Dristan Sinus.



The law, House Bill 164, limits each customer to six grams (two packages) of the products per month. Retailers are now required to track customers' purchases by recording the purchaser's name (verified by a driver's license), date of birth, purchase date, the product name, and the number of items sold. Records are not entered into a database but are maintained for at least two years after the sale.

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Greater Dallas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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House Bill 164

- Non-pharmacy retailers must receive state certification to sell solid-form pseudoephedrine, an ingredient found in cold remedies commonly used to make the drug.
- Retailers must limit access to products containing pseudoephedrine by placing them behind a pharmacy counter or in a locked case, and limit each purchase to no more than six grams or two packages.
- Individuals buying pseudoephedrine or similar products must be at least 16, display identification, and sign for the purchase.
- Protective service workers have the authority to immediately remove a child from a meth lab.

Senate Bill 66

- Establish a Drug-Endangered Child Initiative to protect children who are exposed to the deadly chemicals used to make meth.
- Establish a new Methamphetamine Watch Program to inform retailers of the problems associated with meth production.
- Create prevention programs in public and private schools, and educate teachers and parents on ways to identify and help children who have been exposed to or use the drug.
- Distribute educational materials to members of the agriculture industry regarding the use of anhydrous ammonia, a fertilizer often used to cook meth.

A national study entitled “The Meth Epidemic in America” and released by the National Association of Counties in July 2005 reported the Southwest as the leader in methamphetamine problems. According to the study, the Southwest leads the nation in methamphetamine related arrests with a 96% growth in reported arrest numbers in the past three years. Last year, the Southwest also topped meth drug-related arrests at 76%, and this number continues to increase.

National statistics reveal that meth users are typically high school or college age students, white and blue-collar workers, and the unemployed in the age range of 20 to 30 in rural and emerging urban areas. ☛



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