



## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

### *Funding for Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Meth Program in potential jeopardy*

The Governor's BEST Team, which is responsible for providing budget recommendations to the Governor, may recommend that the entire budget for the Meth Program under Kansas Department of Health and Environment be eliminated.

#### ***What would this mean to Kansas communities?***

- KDHE would no longer conduct meth lab clean-ups, which would have severe consequences to communities. The state would rely on DEA to conduct all clean-ups, which is not as timely and more costly.
- Kansas Retailer Meth Watch program would end- no kits for stores, no technical assistance from KDHE staff. Kansas businesses would no longer have the materials and technical assistance to do their part in fighting the meth epidemic.
- KDHE would no longer provide training to communities about methamphetamine and the environmental impact

#### ***Why is it essential that lab clean-ups occur quickly after they are discovered?***

- Serious dangers to communities:
  - Chemical burns and inhalation hazards for all who come into contact with a lab.
  - Chemicals involved frequently result in fires and explosions.
  - Ground water contamination can lead to contaminated drinking water.
  - Deaths can result from contact with a meth lab.
- These dangers aren't theoretical – they are real. Kansas law enforcement officers and other first responders have experienced serious life long injuries from meth lab exposure. These dangers which are normally encountered by first responders will be increasingly experienced by every day citizens when labs remain on a waiting list to be cleaned up.

- The long-term environmental effects of a meth lab can be prevented if an area is properly cleaned.

***Why is state control of meth lab clean-ups better than federal control?***

- COST: Kansas can do the job for one third the cost. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) clean-up costs are approximately \$3,000 per lab; Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) clean-up costs are approximately \$1,100 per lab.
- RESPONSE TIME: Kansas can get to a site four to five times faster. The DEA response time is typically 8 to 10 hours but has been over 36 hours in some cases; KDHE response time is typically 2 hours. Response time matters.
  - Most law enforcement officers do not have the manpower to secure a lab site for 8 to 10 hours, and *will therefore not dispose of the lab at all* or will dispose of it themselves – a choice that will likely result in even more injuries (or possible deaths) than Kansas saw last year.
- A BETTER RESPONSE: The DEA clean-up contractor only disposes of hazardous materials. KDHE disposes of hazardous materials, all lab trash, reviews the site for impacts to soil and ground water, thoroughly cleans the entire property, addresses air quality issues, and insures the structure is habitable.
  - KDHE can provide even these more comprehensive services for a much lower cost than the DEA can provide just the minimum disposal.
  - The DEA clean-up contractor only addresses the structure where the lab was located and will not address the entire area or other structures that may have been used by the meth manufacturer – in other words the DEA will not insure the safety of Kansas communities, only the disposal of specific and limited materials.

Please contact your local legislators to express your support for the KDHE Meth Program. If we wait until the cuts are made, it will be too late to address the situation. For a list of your legislators, go to <http://www.ku.edu/pri/ksdata/vote/>.