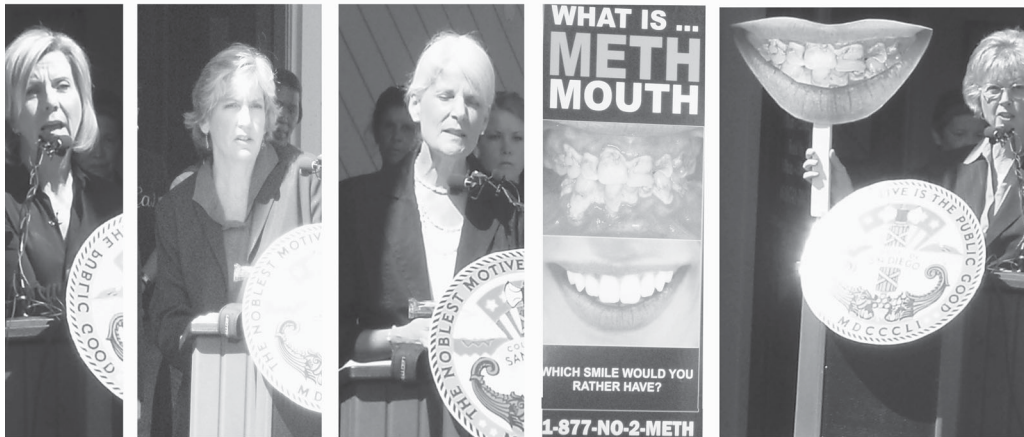




County Launches Campaign to Get People Off Meth



What is Meth?

Methamphetamine is a powerful, addictive stimulant that dramatically affects the central nervous system and has a high potential for abuse. Meth has been called a “double whammy” drug. The user feels energetic and powerful when using, but a “crash” inevitably follows the “high.” In order to avoid or counteract the crash, the user takes more meth. Tolerance develops rapidly, often leading to addiction in a relatively short time.

The acid nature of the Meth often causes dry mouth thus cravings for high sugar foods, drinks, and gum. Widespread

tooth decay is the result in what is called “Meth Mouth”. If left untreated, tooth decay, infection, and severe pain spread to gums, causing tooth loss and life-long damage.

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) launched the “Meth Mouth” campaign to raise awareness about the harmful effects of meth use, and to encourage people to seek treatment for their addiction. As part of the campaign, about 90,000 English and Spanish “Meth Mouth” brochures were distributed at dental clinics, County Family Resource Centers, community organizations, and many other locations throughout the county.



A meth user could be anyone — a teen, a parent, college students, men, women, and professionals. Meth is used in a variety of age groups, lifestyles, and neighborhoods.

“Meth Mouth is one of the most obvious physical effects seen in some meth users,” said Chairwoman Dianne Jacob, from the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. She was joined by Pam Smith, Deputy Director, HHSA’s- East Region; Susan Bower, Director, HHSA’s Alcohol and Drug Services; Peggy Yamagata, RDH, MEd, Program Manager for Dental Health Initiative/ Share the Care, and Dr. Maria Nuñez-Ouji, a dentist at La Maestra Community Health Centers-Dental Clinic in Lemon Grove and former meth users.

“We hope the brochures will help reduce the number of meth-related deaths and encourage people to seek treatment by increasing awareness of the dangers and the signs of meth use, especially meth mouth,” said Smith. “Recognizing the symptoms of meth use could help you assist a friend or a loved one escape the tragedy of meth addiction.”

“People can and do kick their addictions. Recovery is possible with support, perseverance and determination. People suffering from a meth addiction are encouraged to call the Meth Hotline at **1-877-no2meth** (662-6384) or visit www.no2meth.org.” said Bower.

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