

"Experience on the ground" will help stop meth addiction

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Roger Curtiss, Past President of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, testified before Congress on the dramatic impact of methamphetamines on Montana's communities. Curtiss spoke before the National Town Hall on Methamphetamine Awareness and Prevention, hosted by Senators Norm Coleman (R-MN), Conrad Burns (R-MT), Max Baucus (D-MT), and Mark Pryor (D-AR).

Also speaking at the panel was U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Drug Czar John Walters of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and Nora Volkow, MD, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The senators were also joined by drug enforcement officials, rehabilitative services personnel and former users of meth who have experienced the devastating and tragic effects of the synthetically-made drug.

The event was assembled as a national forum to examine the widespread use and impact of the drug, as well as inform the public, deter use and develop possible legislative initiatives to combat meth production and use.

"Fifty years ago, alcohol defined the outer limits of drug use for most Americans. Today the boundaries include a pharmacological candy store of aggressively addicting substances that provide quick fixes," testified Curtiss. "The current meth epidemic in our country is not a passing fad, it is of epidemic proportion and will be with us for quite some time. We need specific training for the treatment workforce who deal with methamphetamine addiction."

The hosts of the Town Hall meeting agreed with Curtiss. "Meth is cheap, potent and available everywhere, and has affected each of our 87 counties in Minnesota," said Senator Coleman. "The effects of meth on families and communities across Minnesota and the nation are devastating."

"We need to provide law enforcement with the resources they need to stop the spread of meth across Big Sky country, but it doesn't end there? treatment and prevention are key to curbing meth use in Montana," said Senator Burns. "Thanks are also due to Roger Curtiss, a treatment

counselor and advocate for meth recovery, who has in the past served as the President of the National Association of Addiction Professionals, and whose experience on the ground in Montana dealing with meth is truly an asset to us."