

Attorney General Suthers Announces State's Largest Effort To Combat Methamphetamine Abuse

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Suthers announces \$50,000 grant from El Pomar Foundation to help with effort

(DENVER) – Attorney General John Suthers announced today the formation of the Colorado Methamphetamine Task Force, pursuant to HB 06-1145 passed earlier this year. The announcement was made following the Methamphetamine Task Force's first meeting.

"Meth abuse in Colorado has risen to extremely dangerous levels," said Attorney General Suthers. "The damage meth inflicts on our communities and economy is immeasurable. This Task Force is the state's largest coordinated, comprehensive approach to address the scourge of methamphetamine abuse in Colorado."

HB 06-1145, which the Colorado District Attorneys Council, General Suthers and many drug prevention and treatment providers worked to pass, requires the Methamphetamine Task Force to assist local communities in curbing methamphetamine abuse and review best practices from across the state and the country for implementation in Colorado communities. The Task Force will also evaluate the progress of the state's current efforts to prevent and treat methamphetamine abuse, as well as evaluate approaches to increase public awareness of the drug's production, distribution and abuse.

Gov. Owens, who signed HB 06-1145 on May 30, 2006, said, "Meth is a highly addictive drug with far-reaching effects on our state. The Task Force will play an important role in eliminating the influence of this pestilence."

Lori Moriarity, a commander with the Thornton Police Department, was appointed by Gov. Owens as one of three vice-chairs of the Methamphetamine Task Force. "This is a great initiative that will reach out to experts in the field and ask the tough questions surrounding the meth epidemic," said Moriarity. "One issue we will focus on is how we can better protect children impacted by meth."

To help the Colorado Methamphetamine Task Force implement its directive, Suthers requested help from the El Pomar Foundation, which will provide the Task Force with a grant of \$50,000 to cover committee operations and expenses for two years.

"Thanks to the generosity of the El Pomar Foundation, the Methamphetamine Task Force can move forward today and begin taking a serious look at Colorado's methamphetamine problem," said Suthers.

William J. Hybl, Chairman and CEO of the El Pomar Foundation, was on-hand to announce the \$50,000 grant to the Methamphetamine Task Force.

"The Trustees of El Pomar Foundation recognize the serious nature of this issue and its negative impacts on Colorado communities. We are appreciative of Attorney General Suthers' leadership on this issue and are pleased to offer this support," said William J. Hybl.

Including this grant, El Pomar has committed nearly \$150,000 to date across the state to address methamphetamine abuse.

The Colorado Methamphetamine Task Force includes the following members:

Chair

Attorney General John Suthers

Vice-Chairs

Jose Esquibel, Interagency Prevention Systems, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (appointed by Senate President Joan Fitzgerald)

Lori Moriarty, Commander, Thornton Police Department, North Metro Drug Task Force (appointed by Gov. Owens)

Janet Wood, Director, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Department of Human Services (appointed by Speaker of the House Andrew Romanoff)

Members

Ty Gee, Attorney with Haddon, Morgan and Foreman

Erin Goff, Attorney with Colorado Municipal League

Chief Gary Hamilton, Cripple Creek Police Department

Judge James Hiatt, 8th Judicial District – State Judicial Department designee

Sheriff Stan Hilkey, Mesa County

John Karakoulakis, Governor's Office Policy Advisor

Janelle Krueger, Principal Consultant, Colorado Department of Education