



NATIONAL
Dental Student
LOBBY DAY

Meth Mouth Prevention and Community Recovery Act

Action Requested

Please become an original cosponsor of the *Meth Mouth Prevention and Community Recovery Act*. In the House, please contact Jasper MacSlarrow at 5-2605 in Congressman Rick Larsen's office. In the Senate, please contact Heather O'Loughlin at 4-2651 in Senator Baucus' office.

Background

An unforeseen consequence of the methamphetamine epidemic has been the alarming rise in cases of "Meth Mouth".

In areas where people have regular access to the drug, more and more dentists have been encountering patients with teeth that are blackened, stained, rotting, and crumbling or falling apart. The damage is so severe that extraction is often the only viable treatment option.

Little is known about what actually causes meth mouth. Some have speculated that the drug's ability to dry the mouth and the tendency of users to grind and clench their teeth are factors.

However, few peer reviewed studies have ever been published about its prevalence, its causes, its physical effects, or its cost to the public.

Dental problems are common among drug users. Many do not care for their teeth regularly and most do not see a dentist often. But methamphetamine seems to be taking a unique and horrific toll inside its users' mouths.

The *Meth Mouth Prevention and Community Recovery Act* will:

- Make grants available for educating 12 to 17 year-olds about meth mouth (with an eye on preventing first-time methamphetamine use);
- Expand and intensify the Department of Health and Human Services' clinical, health services, and public health research on associations between substance use disorders, oral health, and the provision of dental care;
- Authorize a study to determine whether, how, and to what degree methamphetamine use affects for demand for (and provision of) dental care; and
- Promote a series of continuing education activities for dentists to learn about substance use disorders and their relationship to oral health and the provision of dental care.

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