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# Tribune

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## Survey: More teens aware of meth's risks

By Amanda Keim  
Tribune

Those billboards featuring teens with open sores resulting from methamphetamine use are having their intended effect, according to a survey conducted by the group running the advertisements.

The Arizona Meth Project conducted a baseline survey before their gritty advertisements discouraging meth use started running last year and conducted another survey to mark the campaign's one-year anniversary, said program director Amy Rex.

In 2008, 85 percent of teens surveyed indicated they thought trying meth once or twice was a "great risk," up from 73percent in 2007.

Also, 94 percent of teens believed you could get hooked on meth if you tried it just once in 2008, up from 87 percent in 2004.

But Rex thought the biggest accomplishment was how many conversations about meth use parents started with their kids because of the ads.

Of parents surveyed, 47 percent indicated they started a conversation about meth with their children because of an advertisement, up from 27 percent in 2007.

The actual number of talks stayed steady according to teens, with 72 percent saying they've talked to their parents about meth, up from 71 percent in 2007.

But the ads get noticed, with 91 percent of teens saying they've seen the commercials.

Meth wasn't the only drug teens had a more negative perception of this year compared to last - heroin, cocaine and marijuana perceptions were also more negative.

Rex acknowledged the Arizona Meth Project isn't the only reason for the shift in perceptions, but she does believe it's contributing.

"Once you spark the conversation, even if it's only about meth because you saw the meth ads, it does open the door for further conversations," Rex said.

The Arizona Meth Project hopes to run more advertisements by the end of the year, but the exact timing depends on how long it takes to raise the \$2.5 million necessary to run each phase of the campaign, Rex said.

Arizona is the second state to start running the ads after Montana. Similar projects have since started in Iowa, Illinois and Wyoming.