



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89706
Telephone (775) 684-4000 • Fax (775) 684-4010
<http://dhhs.nv.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Steve George, Public Information Officer
(775) 684-4024; sgeorge@dhhs.nv.gov

NEVADA AWARDED \$3.7 MILLION GRANT TO FIGHT METHAMPHETAMINE

Carson City—At a news conference today in Las Vegas at WestCare Nevada, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director Mike Willden announced that the State of Nevada will receive \$3,742,000 over the next five years to address the growing problem of methamphetamine addiction as it relates to child welfare issues. Joan Ohl, Commissioner of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, a Division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, delivered the good news.

The federal grant will be used by several partner agencies to address methamphetamine abuse and its impact on child welfare in Clark County. The funding allows for expanded service capacity, more timely access to appropriate abuse treatment, and for better integration of child welfare services related to methamphetamine abuse. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to promote a reduction in the number of out-of-state placements or possible out-of-state placements for children of methamphetamine-addicted parents.

Governor Gibbons, who was not able to attend the news conference, offered the following statement: "This funding will be a big boost in our efforts to eradicate methamphetamine addiction and the terrible consequences of its use on individuals and families in Nevada. On behalf of the State of Nevada, I express our appreciation to Joan and our federal partners for granting Nevada this funding, and would also like to convey my gratitude to the many partners who worked together to ensure that our state received this vital grant."

Joan Ohl said, "States and communities around the country have been struggling to address the problems faced by children and families faced with the consequences of substance abuse. We believe this grant will help Nevada take a positive step forward in improving the safety, permanency and well-being of children and their families."

Willden added, "As a member of the Governor's Working Group on Methamphetamine Use, I know the value of Nevada receiving this generous grant and fully realize its potential in assisting our state in better protecting children from the harmful consequences of parents or other caregivers who are methamphetamine abusers."

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The federal dollars came as a result of a collaborative request for *Targeted Grants to Increase the Well-being of and to Improve the Permanency Outcomes for Children Affected by Methamphetamine or Substance Abuse* funding by the Nevada Division of Child & Family Services, Nevada Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency, Nevada Office of the Attorney General, Nevada's Court Improvement Project, Clark County Department of Family Services, WestCare Nevada, Clark County's Drug Dependency Court, and the Nevada State Health Division.

Methamphetamine use in Nevada has increased over the past five years at an alarming rate, resulting in one of the highest percentages of abuse in the nation¹. Methamphetamine use by a caregiver who abuses or neglects a child has also risen dramatically during that same period, resulting...An Administration on Family Services report—*Blending Perspectives and Building Common Ground*—stated that “between one-third and two-thirds of children involved with the child welfare system have parents whose substance abuse is a contributing factor.”

Governor Gibbons and First Lady Dawn Gibbons have made the battle against methamphetamine addiction in Nevada a major component of the Governor's health agenda, creating the Governor's Working Group on Methamphetamine Use by Executive Order on January 22, 2007. The 16 member group was tasked with providing information and recommendations to address the negative impacts methamphetamine use and distribution are having on our state. In his 2007 *Executive Budget*, Governor Gibbons included \$17.4 million in funding related to methamphetamine abuse.

Also on hand at today's news conference were Mike Dayton, Governor Gibbons's Chief of Staff; Justice Michael Douglas, Nevada Supreme Court, Randy Munn, First Assistant Attorney General for the Nevada Office of the Attorney General; Dick Steinberg, Executive Director of WestCare Nevada; and Tom Morton, Director, Clark County Department of Family Services.

¹ According to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, methamphetamine addiction in Nevada increased 58% between 1995 and 2005.

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