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EMPLOYER DRUG TESTS DETECT TWO-YEAR LOW IN METH USE

Western, Central Western States Lead Declines in Workplace Drug Tests, Meth Lab Incidents

(WASHINGTON) – Signaling significant progress in the effort to reduce methamphetamine use, new data from workplace drug screenings, conducted by Quest Diagnostics, indicate the number of people testing positive for methamphetamine has hit a two year low. For the period of January 2006 through May 2006, 18 of every 10,000 people tested positive for methamphetamine, down from 33 out of every 10,000 people in 2004 – a 45% reduction over two years, and significant downward trend. This data corroborates recent findings of decreases in youth meth use nationwide. The Youth Behavior Risk Survey, released last week, indicates lifetime youth meth use has declined 36.7% since 2001 and the Monitoring the Future survey indicates a 34% decrease in lifetime use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders combined since 2001.

Similarly, the number of meth lab incidents has decreased sharply from 2004. According to the El Paso Intelligence Center's Clandestine Laboratory Seizure System, the total number of meth lab incidents (operational labs, dumpsites, and sites with equipment) in 2005 was approximately 12,100, down from approximately 17,500 in 2004 – a 30% drop.

The declines in both meth lab incidents and positive drug tests for methamphetamine were steepest in the Western and Central Western regions of the country – particularly in States that were among the first and hardest hit by the methamphetamine challenge.

John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, said, “The robust response nationwide, incorporating both supply and demand reduction efforts, has been an effective one-two punch against methamphetamine. Communities once paralyzed by the threat of this dangerous drug are emerging healthier and safer because we have reduced the diversion of precursor chemicals and the number of meth labs, and because we have educated Americans about the horrors of meth addiction. While there is still much to be done, the progress concentrated in the Western and Central Western States is an encouraging indicator that the effects of our balanced approach will expand eastward, much as the scourge of meth itself spread over the last several years. “

Quest Diagnostics, the largest provider of diagnostic testing, conducts employer drug testing services throughout the Nation, and their Drug Testing Index ® (DTI), a summary of workplace drug test results, is an indicator of national drug use trends. Previous Quest Diagnostics DTI reports showed increases in workplace positivity for amphetamines, tracking closely with the acceleration of the methamphetamine challenge.

For more information, visit www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov or www.questdiagnostics.com