

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairman Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.)
Hearing on Methamphetamine Addiction: Using Science to Explore Solutions**

Chairman Bucshon: I would like to welcome everyone to today's Research and Technology Subcommittee hearing entitled "Methamphetamine Addiction: Using Science to Explore Solutions."

The problem of methamphetamine, or meth, abuse is a serious problem facing our country today. The main compound from which meth derives is pseudoephedrine, known as PSE, which is also a common drug used to treat nasal and sinus congestion. Unfortunately, criminal dealers have discovered new, easier ways to make more potent forms of meth that require the use of chemicals such as PSE. As our witnesses will testify today, meth poses significant public safety and health risks, in addition to financial burdens to local communities where these toxic and dangerous labs are found.

According to a 2013 Government Accountability Office report titled "State Approaches Taken to Control Access to Key Methamphetamine Ingredient Show Varied Impact on Domestic Drug Labs," the number of meth lab incidents declined significantly after 2004 when state and federal regulations on PSE product sales were implemented. Since 2007, however, these numbers have significantly increased, reflecting the emergence of smaller-scale production facilitated by a new method called smurfing, where individuals purchase the legal limits of PSE at multiple stores that are then combined for meth drug production.

But more than figures and statistics, meth addiction is a problem that personally hits home for many Americans. As a medical doctor and physician, I personally know the devastation that addiction can cause and even after meth addicts kick their habit, research shows these addicts experience permanent damage. From January to July of this year, over 65 meth labs have been dismantled in the biggest county in my district, Vanderburgh County, making it the number one county for meth labs in the state. This is extremely close to my home next door in Warrick County and where we have had TWO meth lab explosions within a 2-mile radius of my house. In November of 2011, a meth lab exploded down the street from my house burning a house to the ground and causing over \$25,000 in damage to houses around it.

Despite the grim realities of meth addiction, science can provide valuable insights to this problem. Basic science agencies like the National Institutes of Health have spent over \$68 million in FY 2013 to understand the neurological basis of meth addiction. NSF also supports fundamental non-medical basic science research, in particular behavioral research behind the psychology of addiction.

Our witnesses today reflect the wide spectrum of work and research regarding the various facets of the meth problem. Witnesses will introduce the extent of the meth problem, and will discuss a wide range of topics on how science can help us understand the prevention and treatment of meth as well as how technology can be used to stop unauthorized purchases of PSE.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today and taking time to offer their perspectives on this critical topic for our communities. I'd also like to thank Ranking Member Lipinski and everyone else participating in today's hearing.

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