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**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AG Schimel Joins Northwoods Coalition and Provides Funding to Fight  
Increasing Methamphetamine Abuse**

Eau Claire, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel joined the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth, Marshfield Clinic Health System, and the Northwoods Coalition at a kickoff on preventing methamphetamine abuse in Wisconsin. At the summit, the coalition launched the *kNOw Meth* public awareness campaign and announced a new report that will increase collaboration and guide local efforts to prevent methamphetamine abuse. Attorney General Schimel committed \$50,000 to assist the public awareness campaign and further prevention efforts.

“Ten years ago, we managed to reduce meth in Wisconsin by shutting down the big labs, but the more potent, addictive, and cheaper meth being abused today is from Mexico and has quietly surged in the state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “Of course, for law enforcement, public health, and social services professionals, there is nothing quiet about the surge as it has overwhelmed their systems in recent years.”

“In substance abuse prevention, we know that to be effective you need to bring multiple community sectors together focusing on multiple strategies to reduce and prevent drug use that are sustained over a period of 5-7 years to create lasting change,” said Danielle Luther, Marshfield Clinic Health System substance abuse prevention manager. “We are excited to partner with many experts including the Wisconsin Department of Justice to concentrate on methamphetamine initiatives including over 45 recommendations found in the *kNOw meth* report.”

The *kNOw Meth* public awareness campaign being launched by the coalition and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) will raise awareness in Wisconsin communities. The campaign will inform the public:

- Methamphetamine is a highly addictive stimulant impacting Wisconsin communities;
- Methamphetamine impacts more than just the person abusing the substance, including children and the environment, and;
- Communities should look for signs of addiction, methamphetamine use and trafficking.

Attorney General Schimel committed \$50,000, from DOJ discretionary funding, to support this campaign and other prevention efforts, such as methamphetamine investigation training for local law enforcement.

At the summit, the just-released “Northwoods Coalition *kNOw Meth* Report” made a set of recommendations to aid local, regional, and state efforts in combatting the methamphetamine epidemic. Using strategies from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), the recommendations aim to accomplish population-level change by increasing public awareness of methamphetamine use with key messages, and to utilize local data to make the messages meaningful to Wisconsin communities.

The summit in Eau Claire was attended by nearly 300 professionals, representing a multi-disciplinary team of public safety, public health, drug treatment, and prevention. In addition to reviewing the *kNOw Meth* Report, attendees reviewed law enforcement intelligence on methamphetamine in the region, instruction on conducting a successful public awareness campaign, drug testing programs, local action planning led by Counter Drug of Iowa, and heard from an individual in recovery.

In February 2017, Attorney General Schimel briefed the Wisconsin State Legislature on the growing threat of methamphetamine and included findings from a January 2017 joint [DOJ and Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\) study](#). The report details methamphetamine use increased 250 to 300 percent from 2011 to 2015. Recently, the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory Bureau (WSCLB) has experienced a 13.5% increase in methamphetamine submissions, from 1,012 in 2015 to 1,149 in 2016.

Attorney General Schimel has taken additional action against rising methamphetamine abuse in Wisconsin:

- Appointed an assistant attorney general (AAG) to assist local district attorneys and law enforcement in the prosecution of methamphetamine-related cases. This AAG represents the state in criminal cases; advises local prosecutors on matters relating to methamphetamine trafficking; and assists in the

development of legislation concerning the growing threat that methamphetamine poses to local communities.

- Hired an analyst at the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC) and purchased equipment for investigating meth labs; and is providing training and financial support for the efforts of local law enforcement agencies and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces. Funding for these initiatives comes from a \$1.5 million Methamphetamine Initiative Grant from the United States Department of Justice
- Hired four additional criminal investigation agents who are focused on drug interdiction and drug trafficking.
- Increased spending on treatment alternative and diversion courts (TAD) in 51 counties and two tribes, with more than \$6 million provided annually to support these local programs.
- In 2017, Attorney General Schimel successfully sought a stay from the Supreme Court of the United States in *Anderson, et al. v. Loertscher*, a challenge to the state's Unborn Child Protection Act. The Unborn Child Protection Act or 1997 Wisconsin Act 292 gives state actors the legal authority to assist substance-addicted, pregnant women with their addiction, thus protecting both the mothers and their unborn children.

The [Northwoods Coalition](#), formed in 1995, is the largest and oldest coalition dedicated to substance abuse prevention in Wisconsin. Representatives from 50 coalitions in a 34-county region, including the 11 Wisconsin Tribal Nations, serve on a non-governing advisory board to help shape policies, practices and programs to address public health issues arising from use of alcohol and other drugs. Marshfield Clinic Health System staff provide support including education, training, technical assistance and other resources to members of Northwoods Coalition.