

# The Methamphetamine Use Problem: From a Health System Lens

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## According to Research and News Reports...



- Methamphetamine use has returned with a vengeance with double the case numbers identified over the course of the decade – *New York Times*
- Methamphetamine use vastly outpaces opioid use, but is overshadowed by all the attention on the opioid epidemic - *HealthDay*
- A large percentage of methamphetamine use involves alcohol and other drugs – *SAMHSA*
- Significant crossover between methamphetamine use and mental illness – *National Center for Biotechnology Information*
- Methamphetamine use results in serious medical conditions and complications requiring long hospital stays – *National Institute of Drug Abuse*
- Social consequences of long term methamphetamine use tragic – *Medical News Today*
- Methamphetamine is increasing among older individuals – *Journal of Addiction*

# Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

*Methamphetamine use has returned with a vengeance with double the case numbers identified over the course of the decade – New York Times*

- What do the numbers say at Dignity Health hospitals (Mercy San Juan, Methodist, Mercy General and Mercy Hospital Folsom)?

	Aug. 2016 – Aug. 2016	Aug. 2018 – Aug. 2019	Percent Change
Methamphetamine Cases (Primary and Secondary Conditions)	2,412	4,044	68% increase!

- 3,543 of the total 4,044 cases were unique encounters

# Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

*Methamphetamine use vastly outpaces opioid use, but is overshadowed by all the attention on the Opioid epidemic - HealthDay*

- How do cases related to methamphetamine use compare to cases for opioid use disorders in our hospitals?

	Aug. 2015 – Aug. 2016	Aug. 2018 – Aug. 2019	Percent Growth
Methamphetamine Cases	2,412	4,044	68% increase
Opioid Cases	600	640	7% increase

- The prevalence of methamphetamine cases in Dignity Health hospitals is almost 7 times greater than opioid cases!

# Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

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*A large percentage of methamphetamine use involves alcohol and other drugs – SAMHSA*

- 28% of the total 4,044 methamphetamine cases seen in Dignity Health hospitals involved other substance use
  - Alcohol most common
  - Cannabis
  - Cocaine
  - Opioids
  - Other unspecified stimulants



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## *Significant crossover between methamphetamine use and mental illness*

— *National Center for Biotechnology Information*

- 18% of the individuals presenting to our hospitals for methamphetamine abuse have mental illnesses
- Wide range of mental disorders:
  - Schizophrenia and paranoia
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Homicidal and suicidal ideation
  - Bi-polar
  - Hallucinations
- Methamphetamine users are often violent, aggressive, dangerous to themselves and others and hard to manage

# Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

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## Methamphetamine use results in serious medical conditions and complications requiring long hospital stays – *National Institute of Drug Abuse*

- Of the total 4,044 individuals presenting to Dignity Health emergency departments, 343 were discharged home
- The remaining 3,701 had medical conditions that required admission to the inpatient units
- Most common and serious medical conditions we see:
  - ✓ Respiratory disease
  - ✓ Heart disease
  - ✓ Stroke
  - ✓ Kidney disease
  - ✓ Infections (sepsis, skin, dental)
- Pregnancy and labor complications are significant
- Also numerous cases of HIV and Hepatitis
- Average length of stay in the hospital for all 4,044 cases is 5.33 days
  - *This represents over 21,500 hospital days a year*

# Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

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Social consequences of long term methamphetamine use tragic – *Medical News Today*

- Of the total 4,044 methamphetamine cases at Dignity Health hospitals:
  - 2,636 or 65% were unemployed
  - 1,008 or 25% were disabled
  - Only 28 reported being homeless



## Health Systems See the Reality of a Frightening Health Issue

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*Methamphetamine is increasing among older individuals – Journal of Addiction*

- Overwhelmingly, the majority of methamphetamine cases seen in Dignity Health hospitals are actually younger individuals – 91%
  - Between the ages of 20 and 39
  - Average age is 29
  - Youngest age was 8
- The remaining 9% of methamphetamine cases are individuals 40 years and older
  - Average age is 51
  - Oldest age is 90
- The prevalence of methamphetamine use continues to be more prominent among males than females – with males representing 56% of the total cases

## Methamphetamine Use Crosses Many Demographic Boundaries

- Methamphetamine cases presenting to our emergency departments are concentrated in several communities:
  - City of Sacramento
  - Citrus Heights
  - Carmichael
  - North Highlands
  - Rancho Cordova
  - Elk Grove
- However, cases are widespread across the region - Rio Linda, Fair Oaks, Orangevale, Folsom, communities in El Dorado, Placer and Nevada Counties, the Bay Area and elsewhere
- 71% of all individuals seen are insured by Medi-Cal or Medi-Medi
  - 15% Medicare
  - 9% Commercial
  - 4% Uninsured
  - 1% Veterans



## Recidivism Rates are High Among this Patient Population

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- For many methamphetamine users, the emergency department has become a revolving door
- Case studies:

*Male, 62 years of age has had 30 encounters at Dignity Health hospitals in past 12 months.*

*Health issues: thrombosis, hepatitis C, uncontrolled asthma, diverticulitis, major depressive orders, schizophrenia, alcohol and other substance abuse in addition to methamphetamine.*

*15 inpatient psychiatric hospitalization in past seven years.*

*Currently linked to services, but non-compliant with appointments and medications.*

*Female, 42 years of age has had 16 encounters at Dignity Health hospitals in past 12 months.*

*Health issues: homeless, congestive heart failure, liver cirrhosis, hypertension, bipolar disorder in addition to methamphetamine addiction.*

*No history of linkage to services or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.*

# How Do We Reach This Patient Population?

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- Emergency Departments present an important opportunity to intervene with methamphetamine users
- Hospital staff can be instrumental in educating patients and their families about the negative physical, mental and social health consequences of continued use
- Can offer referrals to treatment and counseling services
- Doing this now for individuals with opioid use disorders
- Welcome ideas for partnering with our community to address this health issue

Questions?

Thank You!