

# Substance Abuse Trends **Alert!**

May 2020

## Use of Methamphetamine Increases in Florida and Across the Nation

Methamphetamine (meth) is a potent stimulant with high potential for abuse and dependence. Long-term use of meth is associated with several poor health outcomes, including mental health disorders such as psychosis, neurocognitive decline, and dental problems.<sup>1-3</sup> Though available with a prescription for the treatment of conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy, a stronger form of meth is manufactured and sold illegally. Over-the-counter medications such as decongestants are used to manufacture meth in clandestine laboratories, making it readily available. The labs themselves pose a risk of injury and death.<sup>4</sup>

### Methamphetamine Use in the US

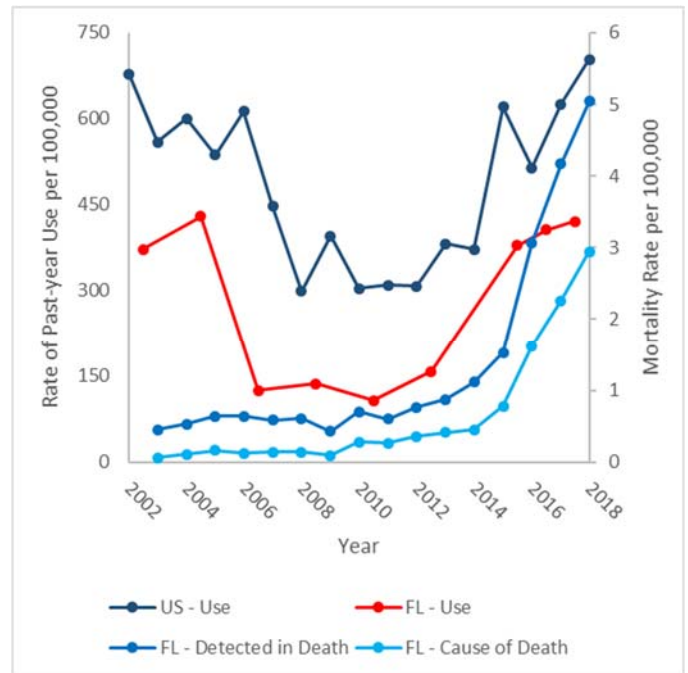
Following a period of decline in the first decade of the 2000s, the prevalence of past-year meth use has been generally increasing since a low point in 2008 (Figure 1). Increases in fatal meth overdose have also been observed, particularly deaths in which opioids are co-involved.<sup>5</sup>

### Methamphetamine Use in Florida

Though the prevalence of meth use in FL is lower than the US overall, patterns of use over time are similar for the state and nation (Figure 1). FL has seen a recent increase in the prevalence of meth use after an earlier decline. Notably, unlike the previous period of higher prevalence of meth use, the recent increase is paralleled by an increase in overdose death in which meth was present or the primary cause of death. In addition to the difference in death rates between the two periods, concomitant use of heroin has increased, with the percentage of people who use meth also using heroin rising to 26.3% in 2017-2018 compared to only 5.26% in 2006-2007. These findings are consistent with recent national studies.<sup>6-8</sup>

### Recommendations

Though studies that focus on adolescent stimulant use are limited, programs to prevent tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis, especially interactive



**Figure 1.** Self-reported, past-year methamphetamine (meth) use, US and FL, and fatal drug poisoning in which meth caused and/or detected at death, 2002 - 2018. Source: [NSDUH](#) and [FL ME Commission](#).

school-based programs have positively impacted stimulant initiation among adolescents.<sup>9</sup> Based on current evidence, comprehensive prevention programs that offer a combination of approaches (e.g. school- and family-based programs) hold the most promise for delaying or preventing adolescent stimulant use.<sup>9</sup> Currently, there are no effective medications available for treatment of amphetamine-type substance use disorder or to reverse the effects of meth.<sup>9,10</sup> However, therapies such as cognitive-behavioral treatment and contingency management are effective at treating stimulant use disorder involving meth.<sup>9,10</sup> People can recover from addiction to meth if effective treatment is made available for the SUD itself as well as the myriad health and personal consequences associated with long-term use.

For more information, please visit the following:

## Additional Information Sources

[Drug Enforcement Administration. Drugs of Abuse: A DEA Resource Guide, 2020 Edition.](#)

[Florida Department of Children and Families. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Resources.](#)

[Florida Department of Children and Families and Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association. Stimulant Use Disorders Webinar.](#)

[National Institute on Drug Abuse Research Report Series: Methamphetamine.](#)

[National Forensic Laboratory Information System: Drug 2018 Annual Report.](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Learn About Methamphetamine.](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Helpline.](#)

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