

AG Zoeller, Prosecutor Chris Gaal Target Meth & Prescription Drug Abuse

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller helped unveil a statewide public awareness campaign today to send a warning to those who buy certain medicines for the purpose of making meth.

Zoeller joined Monroe County Prosecutor Chris Gaal, Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan and representatives from the Indiana Retail Council in Bloomington.

“Law enforcement, prosecutors and our legislature have all worked hard to crackdown on the use and manufacturing of methamphetamine, and the fact is, more must be done” Zoeller said. “This public awareness campaign warns Hoosiers about that purchasing pseudoephedrine for the purposes of either making meth or selling it to a meth cook is a crime. This joint initiative shows that state leaders are willing to join forces with the manufacturers of over-the-counter cold and allergy medicines to remind all Hoosiers: if you’re purchasing these items for a meth cook, you are breaking the law and you will be arrested.”

The voluntary educational campaign aims to increase public awareness about the criminal enterprise known as “smurfing” — the practice of purchasing cold and allergy medicines containing pseudoephedrine (PSE) to sell to methamphetamine cooks. The anti-smurfing campaign informs consumers through signage displayed at the point of sale that smurfing is a criminal offense and an integral part of the meth production process. As a result, the simple act of buying certain cold or allergy product for a stranger can fuel Indiana’s meth problem.

The public-private partnership was developed by CHPA, a national association representing the makers of over-the-counter medicines, and is carried out by Indiana retailers on a voluntary basis.

Zoeller also highlighted a public awareness campaign on prescription drug abuse. Statewide radio, TV, online, print and outdoor advertisements now feature information about www.BitterPill.IN.gov. Zoeller and the Indiana Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force launched the website to serve as a one-stop-shop for information about prescription drug abuse and misuse.

“As Monroe County Prosecutor, one of my key efforts in outreach to our community has been the Pharmaceutical Safe Disposal Program,” said Gaal. Lauded for its success, the Association of Indiana Counties awarded Gaal with the 2013 Local Government Cooperation Award this fall, a program he hopes will be replicated throughout Indiana. “My office recognizes the inherent danger of addiction and overdose, especially to

young people, who may have access to these prescription drugs. My hope is that through education, we can begin to turn the tide against addiction and overdoses.” In one TV ad titled “Cautious Mom,” a mother says she talked with her teenage son about illegal drugs like cocaine, heroin and meth, but her son is seen taking prescriptions bottles from the medicine cabinet just behind her. Zoeller said that parents should include warnings about prescription medications in their talks with their children about the dangers of drugs.

Last year, more than 1 in 5 Indiana students surveyed reported using prescription drugs without a prescription, according to the Indiana Youth Survey 2012. Children who learn a lot about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50 percent less likely to use than those who do not, according to the Partnership at DrugFree.org.

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