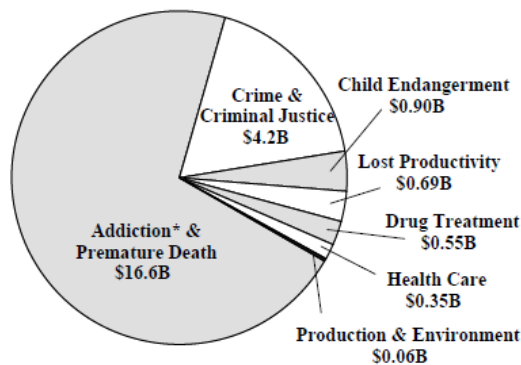


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Methamphetamine Cost Society an Estimated \$23.4 Billion in 2005; Majority of Costs Related to Addiction, Premature Death, Crime, & Criminal Justice

Methamphetamine cost the United States an estimated \$23.4 billion in 2005, according to the first national estimate of the economic burden of meth use. The majority (71%) of these costs—an estimated \$16.6 billion—were related to the “intangible burden that addiction places on dependent users and to premature mortality” (p. xiii). The costs associated with processing offenders for the possession and sale of meth, meth-induced violent and property crimes, and parole and probation violations for meth offenses represent 18%, or an estimated \$4.2 billion, of the total costs. Other costs associated with methamphetamine use include child endangerment, lost productivity, drug treatment, health care, and harms resulting from production. According to the authors, “it is probably not the recreational meth user who imposes the greatest burden on our society, but rather those who become addicted, engage in crime, need treatment or emergency assistance, cannot show up for work, lose their jobs, or die prematurely” (p. xvi). It should be noted that indicators show that methamphetamine use has been declining in recent years, after peaking in 2005 (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 18, Issue 13).

Social Costs of Methamphetamine in the United States, 2005
(Estimated Total Cost=\$23.4 billion)



*The estimate of the cost of methamphetamine addiction is based on the number of people dependent on the drug and the monetary value of the lost quality of life, measured by a reduction in quality-adjusted life-years.

NOTE: The authors acknowledge that many of the estimates are “subject to substantial uncertainty” so they provide lower- and upper-bound estimates, as well as “best estimates,” for each component. For example, they estimate the total economic burden of methamphetamine to be in the range of \$16.2 billion to \$48.3 billion, with \$23.4 billion being the best estimate. Data presented are the best estimates.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Nicosia, N., Pacula, R.L., Kilmer, B., Lundberg, R., and Chiesa, J., *The Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States, 2005*. Drug Policy Research Center, RAND Corporation, 2009. Available online at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG829>.