

February 15, 2013

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) introduced the bipartisan Methamphetamine Education, Treatment, and Hope (METH) Act to modernize programs to better combat methamphetamine abuse. The METH Act focuses on raising awareness of methamphetamine addiction and providing resources for the most at-risk communities and individuals.

“Meth abuse is one of the most serious issues in northern California and across the country. It affects families and our community, and needs immediate action. By bringing resources to areas that need them the most, we can raise awareness and help people recover from methamphetamine addiction,” said Rep. McNerney.

The METH Act, supports youth involvement in programs that deter drug usage, improves identification and prevention of methamphetamine addiction, and broadens support for specific programs targeted to serve pregnant and parenting women. The METH Act helps medical professionals raise awareness about how to recognize signs of substance abuse and apply practices for screening and treating individuals at-risk for developing an addiction.

“It is imperative that we address crime in our region and increase public safety. This bill will help keep our families healthy, safe and drug-free. When we see crime rates drop, especially usage of drugs like methamphetamine, our entire community benefits,” added McNerney.

Specifically, the bill instructs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to:

- Collaborate with professionals to raise awareness about how to recognize signs of substance abuse and apply best practices for screening and treating individuals with or at-risk for developing an addiction, including addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs
 - Award grants in rural areas that are determined to have a shortage of mental health professional or substance abuse treatment options, and to areas determined to have high rates of addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs
 - Expand, intensify, and coordinate efforts to provide methamphetamine or other drug addiction treatment to pregnant and parenting women
 - Maintain a clearinghouse that provides information and educational materials to employers and employees about drug-testing policies and programs
 - Support youth involvement in developing and implementing prevention strategies for youth with regard to meth and other drugs

The bill is cosponsored by Reps. Bobby Rush, Charlie Rangel, G.K. Butterfield, Alcee Hastings, David Valadao, and Ben Ray Luján.