



**Snohomish County
County Executive's Office**

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Aaron Reardon
County Executive

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**Reardon announces public/private partnership
to tackle meth scourge at today's 'State of the
County' address**

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*Major retailers agree to voluntarily put key meth ingredient
behind the counter; idea came after ride with Lynnwood police officer*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today will announce an anti-methamphetamine initiative aimed at voluntarily restricting access to a key ingredient needed to cook the lethal drug.

Local retailers will be asked to restrict access to over-the-counter drugs that contain pseudoephedrine, which can be cooked up into methamphetamine. Several companies and retail organizations – including state associations representing grocery stores and pharmacies – have already agreed to embrace to Executive Reardon's proposal.

"I am asking retailers in Snohomish County to join me and help rid our community of the scourge of meth," Executive Reardon said. "We want them to have pseudoephedrine products voluntarily removed from their shelves."

Reardon will launch the partnership at his 'State of the County' address, which he delivers at noon before the South Snohomish County Chamber of Commerce at Lynnwood's Embassy Suites Hotel, 20610 44th Avenue W.

Current Washington state law restricts says buyers can purchase no more than three boxes containing products with pseudoephedrine per day. But cooks simply go from

pharmacy to pharmacy, store to store in order to get enough ingredients to make the methamphetamine.

Executive Reardon credited a Lynnwood police officer, T.J. Brooks, for focusing his attention on pseudoephedrine.

“We talked a lot about the problem of meth and the crimes associated with it,” Executive Reardon said. “Officer Brooks told me that I should stand up to the retailers who indiscriminately sell products used to make meth and ask them to do the right thing by our citizens.”

Executive Reardon said he will encourage citizens to patronize businesses that agree to voluntarily restrict access to pseudoephedrine. He also promised to let citizens know which businesses continue to make pseudoephedrine-based products available at their front counters.

Methamphetamine continues to take a steep toll on Snohomish County – both on citizens who use the highly addictive psychoactive drug and their children, and to local governments and schools overwhelmed by criminal activity associated with meth.

A recent study found that 70 percent of criminal cases in the County court system were drug related and that 35 percent were methamphetamine related. Results from a jail study revealed that among 500 Snohomish County arrestees tested for drugs, more than 73 percent tested positive for some illegal substance. Nearly 20 percent of those tested positive for methamphetamine.

Meth labs are also a serious Snohomish County problem: 321 labs were shut down by local law enforcement agencies between 2001 and 2004, including 51 last year.

The cost of methamphetamine use courses through local government. Increased law enforcement costs to deal with street crime, neighborhood drug houses, dealers, prosecution, court costs, incarceration, hazardous waste cleanup, the care of dependent children of addicts, and health and social impacts draw resources and tax dollars from other public programs.

Executive Reardon recently endorsed Sen. Maria Cantwell’s Arrest Meth Act of 2005 - S. 430 – which would make authorize \$100 million in 2006 and 2007 that states and local governments could use in the on-going fight against methamphetamine.

The figure would increase to \$200 million in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

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