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Schwarz bills seek to prevent spread of Methamphetamine

April 7, 2000 — The state Senate overwhelmingly approved two bills designed to counteract the increased usage of the illegal drug methamphetamine in Michigan.

Senate Bill 1043 creates a new law making it a crime to operate a clandestine laboratory to manufacture illegal drugs. It amends the Public Health Code by making it a felony to own or use a facility to manufacture controlled substances, including methamphetamine. It also makes it a felony to possess chemical or laboratory equipment to illegally manufacture a controlled substance, or to knowingly sell chemicals or laboratory equipment to an individual who intends to use it in the manufacture of illicit drugs.

"Methamphetamine is an extremely dangerous drug to make and use," said Senator John J.H. Schwarz, M.D., R-Battle Creek. "This drug is similar in effects to cocaine and is highly addictive. It also creates psychological problems and has been known to cause violent and paranoid behavior."

SB 1043 establishes increased penalties for violating the new methamphetamine laws including up to 10 years imprisonment and $100,000 in fines. Those who violate this law in the presence of a child, near a church, school, residence or business, or who use weapons or booby traps
could face an additional 20 to 25 years imprisonment.

The legislation also provides for up to 20 years imprisonment and $100,000 in fines for unlawfully disposing of the hazardous waste created during the manufacturing of methamphetamine.

Senate Bill 1186 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to add to the sentencing guidelines felony penalties for operating or maintaining a controlled substance laboratory as proposed by SB 1043.

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It is estimated that for each pound of methamphetamine manufactured, there are five to six pounds of toxic waste produced from the lethal and flammable mixture of chemicals used to make the drug. Drug makers often dump this toxic waste on the ground or in local sewer systems.

"With arrests for making and using this drug on the rise in the Midwest, we need to be proactive in halting the spread of this drug in Michigan" Schwarz said. "It can cost $150,000 or more to clean up a site used to manufacture methamphetamine, but personal risks for our young people, including death, can run much higher."

It is reported that use of Methamphetamine among high school seniors in the United States has doubled in recent years.

SB 1043 and 1186 now go to the House for consideration.

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