



State of North Carolina

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March 1, 2014

North Carolina Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger
North Carolina House of Representatives Speaker Thom Tillis
Co-Chairs, Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations

Senator Stan Bingham
Senator Thom Goolsby
Senator Buck Newton
Representative James Boles, Jr.
Representative Leo Daughtry
Representative John Faircloth
Representative Pat Hurley
Co-Chairs, Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety

Greg Olley, Ph.D.
Chairman, Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services

North Carolina General Assembly
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1096

Re: Report on Number of Methamphetamine Laboratories for 2013

Dear Members:

In accordance with N.C. Session Law 2011-240, Section 4, please find the attached report which provides the number of methamphetamine laboratories discovered in the State for calendar year 2013.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. We would be happy to respond to any questions you may have regarding this report.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristi Hyman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristi Hyman
Chief of Staff

cc: Kristine Leggett, NCGA Fiscal Research Division
Greg McLeod, SBI



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NORTH CAROLINA
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GREGORY S. MCLEOD
DIRECTOR

2013 Annual Report on Methamphetamine Laboratories in North Carolina

During calendar year 2013, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation has responded to five hundred and sixty-one (561) Methamphetamine Drug Laboratory incidents throughout North Carolina. This represents a 22% increase over the four hundred and sixty lab (460) incidents in 2012. Over-the-counter pseudoephedrine products were the main precursor utilized in all of the Methamphetamine Drug Laboratories that were seized. Statewide, 86 children were removed from homes where meth was being manufactured last year, down from 120 in 2012.

The counties with the largest number of labs in 2013 were Wilkes (50), Onslow (46), Anson (30), Catawba (27), Sampson (27), Gaston (26), Burke (23), and Johnston (22). The counties with the largest increase in labs from 2012 were Onslow, Lincoln, Gaston, Stanly, and Sampson. The counties surrounding Charlotte saw a significant increase in 2013 over 2012, with Anson (30), Gaston (26), Union, (20), Lincoln (19), Stanly (15), and Rowan (10) seeing increases.

During calendar year 2013, National Pseudoephedrine Log Exchange System, created in 2012 as a part of S.L. 2011-240, has blocked approximately 44,000 sales of more than 56,000 boxes of medicines containing pseudoephedrine. The Nplex system has potentially prevented more than 147,000 grams of pseudoephedrine from being converted to methamphetamine by illegal drug manufacturers. The amount of pseudoephedrine blocked could have been used to make 262 pounds of meth. This has been achieved through the stop-sale feature of the system which allows retailers to block unlawful purchases at the point of sale and provides law enforcement with valuable information in real time.

The most common method for obtaining pseudoephedrine products is through purchases from retail pharmacies. Law enforcement has recognized from evidence found at methamphetamine lab sites, investigations, and intelligence that although restricted, cold and allergy medicine containing pseudoephedrine is being illegally obtained through the technique known as "smurfing." This is the practice of purchasing the legal allowable amount of products containing pseudoephedrine at one retail outlet and then attempting purchases at other stores that in total do not exceed the daily or monthly legal limit. This can be done by one individual or a group of individuals operating together in one city, multiple cities, multiple counties, or multiple states depending on the sophistication of the operation in any particular region. Significant amounts of pseudoephedrine can be obtained this way. In North Carolina, investigators commonly see "smurfers" travel to multiple counties and the states of Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina to purchase pseudoephedrine. Of particular concern to law enforcement is the fact that smurfers are increasingly not utilizing their own identification, but instead are using multiple means of identification. They commonly utilize identification cards of friends and relatives to make illegal purchases. Many individuals that have been arrested for organized illegal pseudoephedrine purchases have been found to be in possession of dozens of stolen or borrowed licenses from multiple states.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy, through its National Methamphetamine and Pharmaceuticals Initiative has stated that "sufficient evidence now exists to support the conclusion that smurfing is at epidemic proportions

across the country with states in various stages of 'smurfing sophistication.'" The SBI, in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, has conducted numerous investigations that have identified smurfing groups operating throughout North Carolina. These groups are in turn providing pseudoephedrine for the purpose of the manufacturing of methamphetamine.

The "One Pot" method has contributed significantly to the increase in the number of methamphetamine laboratories in North Carolina and throughout the United States. Approximately 81 percent of the meth labs discovered in North Carolina in 2013 used the "One Pot" method. This method is much faster, requires no specialized equipment and all the required chemicals are readily available through common retail outlets. The proliferation of these simple, extremely volatile labs continues to drive the in lab numbers in North Carolina and the surrounding states.

The SBI is the only agency in North Carolina with agents who are specially trained and equipped to dismantle meth labs safely. To meet the increased work load, the SBI meth agents have trained other agents throughout the state to assist in the dismantling and disposal of meth labs in addition to their of their full-time meth lab response assignments. SBI agents also provide safe disposal of meth lab waste at no cost to local law enforcement. Under the program launched in September of 2012, SBI agents and trained local officers remove, neutralize and package meth lab waste and SBI agents then transport it to one of eight container sites across the state for pickup and environmentally friendly, proper destruction by a hazardous waste contractor.

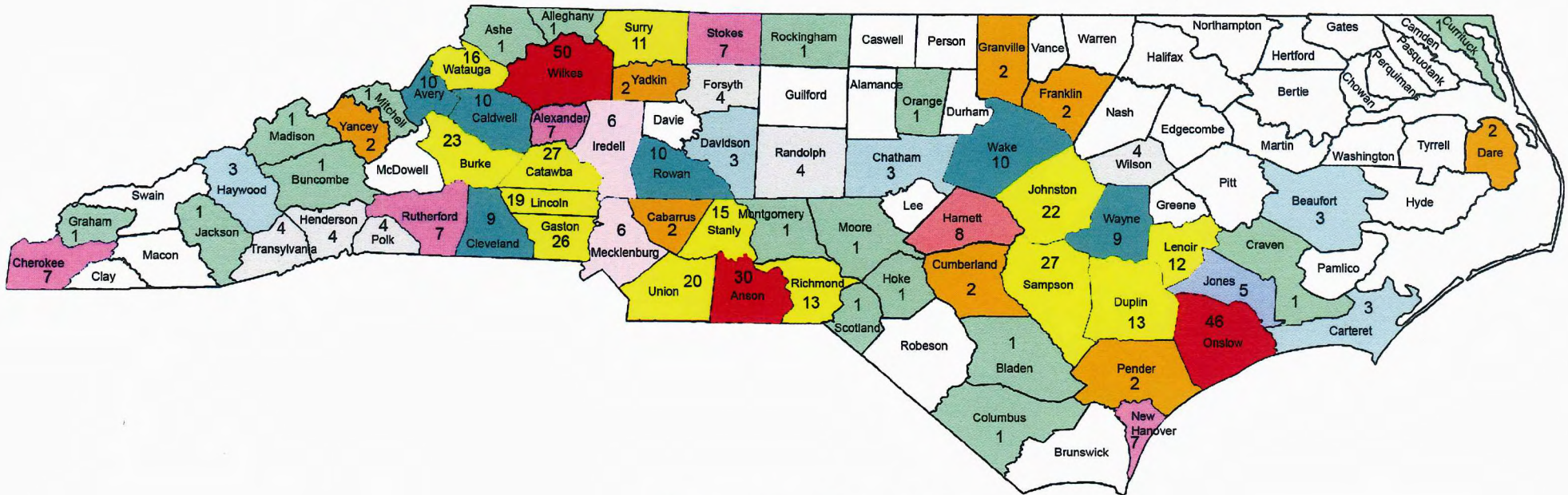
Attachments: 2013 State Map of Meth Lab Incidents
 2003-2013 Labs by the Year Chart
 Children Affected by Meth Labs by the Year Chart

Prepared by: Van W. Shaw
 Deputy Assistant Director
 North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation

2013 Clandestine Lab Responses

Total: 561

(As of December 31, 2013)



North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation



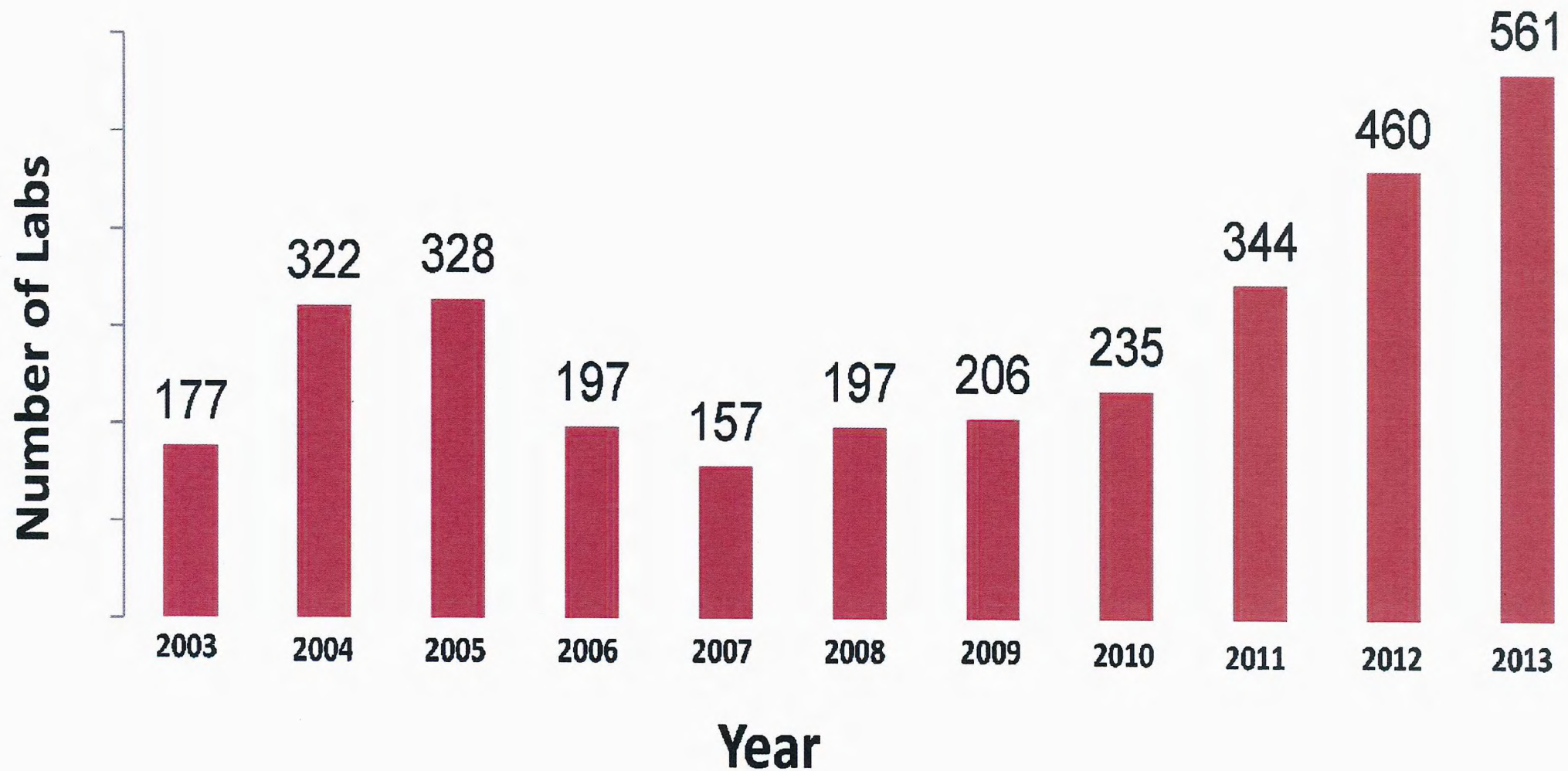
- 30 + Labs
- 11 - 29 Labs
- 9 - 10 Labs
- 8 Labs
- 7 Labs

- 6 Labs
- 5 Labs
- 4 Labs
- 3 Labs
- 2 Labs
- 1 Lab



SBI Clandestine Laboratory Responses

2003 through 2013





2003 - 2013

Number of Children Affected/Injured at Laboratories

