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August 12, 2005

Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

It has been my understanding, from several sources, that the Department of Health and Human Services has been the principal barrier preventing the Administration from formulating a policy to address the methamphetamine epidemic. And now I have learned that the Department of Health and Human Services is a *primary sponsor* of a conference controlled by the Harm Reduction Coalition and the Harm Reduction Project in your home state of Utah, on August 19 and 20, 2005.[1]

I find this all to be deeply offensive.

I am enormously frustrated with your Department for dithering on the meth issue while the rest of America fights an epidemic that is viciously tearing apart families and communities throughout the country.

A foundational premise of the so-called "harm reduction" ideology promoted at the HHS-sponsored conference is that we should not be fighting a "war on drugs," but rather limiting drugs' harmful effects. Harm reduction is, in fact, a vehicle drug legalization proponents have hijacked to pave the way to their ultimate objective.

Any claim that your Department is unaware of the pro-legalization agenda and "soft" approach to illegal narcotics of the harm reduction advocates is utterly implausible. This agenda is readily apparent from the conference topics sprinkled throughout the program, as well as the very websites of the assorted harm reduction organizations sponsoring and participating in the conference.

Shockingly, Major Session IV of the HHS-sponsored Harm Reduction Coalition and Harm Reduction Project conference next week is entitled, "We Don't Need a 'War' on Methamphetamine."[2]

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[1] See http://harmredux.org/sponsors.html (last visited August 11, 2005).
[2] See http://www.harmredux.org/ConferenceProgram2005NEW.pdf (last visited August 11, 2005).

Other conference topics include, "You Don't Have to Be Clean & Sober. Or Even Want to Be!" and sexual topics consistent with the harm reduction ideology that shuns an abstinence-based approach for at-risk communities: "Tweaking Tips for Party Boys," and two sessions on engaging in sex without condoms, "Barebacking: A Harm Reduction Approach," and "Without Condoms: Harm Reduction, Unprotected Sex, Gay Men and Barebacking."[3]

Among the speakers and moderators at this conference sponsored by your Department, five are identified in the program as representatives of the Drug Policy Alliance, giving seven presentations at the conference. The Drug Policy Alliance describes itself as "the nation's leading organization working to end the war on drugs."[4] Along with its major donor George Soros, the Drug Policy Alliance helped produce *It's Just a Plant*, a pro-marijuana children's book.[5] Marsha Rosenbaum, who is also presenting at the HHS-sponsored conference,[6] wrote the epilogue for this disturbing book.

Both the Harm Reduction Coalition and the Harm Reduction Project are partners with the Drug Policy Alliance for its upcoming 2005 International Drug Policy Reform Conference. According to the Alliance's conference materials regarding who should attend this meeting: "Anyone who believes the war on drugs is doing more harm than good!"[7]

The program for the HHS-sponsored conference next week also includes a "Special Thank You" to a handful of people, including HHS employee Dr. Glen Hanson, of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). As you know, NIDA's mission is "to lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction." To what end is the Department's goal to "lead the nation" with harm reduction and drug legalization partners?

Luciano Colonna, Executive Director of the Harm Reduction Project and host of the DHHS-sponsored conference, and one reported as briefing your aides in advance of the conference,[8] is quoted as stating that, "For a lot of people, meth use is a rite of passage and it really does increase sexual pleasure."[9]

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[3] Id.

[4] See the Drug Policy Alliance website at http://www.drugpolicy.org/homepage.cfm (last visited August 12, 2005).

[5] Cortes, Ricardo. *It's Just a Plant.* Brooklyn, NY: Magic Propaganda Mills Books. January 2005, 48 pages. The book is also promoted on the Drug Policy Alliance website at http://www.drugpolicy.org/library/bookstore/ijap1104.cfm (last visited August 12, 2005).

[6] Ms. Rosenbaum is presenting "Safety First: A Reality-Based Approach to Teens, Drugs and Drug Education."

[7] See http://www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/ (last visited August 12, 2005).

[8] Stewart, K., "'Significant meth problem' in Utah" *The Salt Lake Tribune*, August 10, 2005, p. A7.

[9] Shell, B., "Meth conference to focus on 'comprehensive care' Organizers want to explore mix of drug, unsafe sex, HIV" *The Washington Blade*, August 12, 2005 (available at http://www.washblade.com/2005/8-12/news/national/meth.cfm (last visited August 12, 2005))

That Administration officials from your Department are consulting with harm reduction advocates such as Colonna, and sponsoring conferences controlled by the harm reduction network, completely undermines the work of the President, the Congress, and the men and women who work in law enforcement across the nation who are trying desperately to fight the meth epidemic.

Please provide the following materials no later than 5:00pm Tuesday, August 16, 2005:

1) An official statement of why the Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring the August 19-20 Harm Reduction conference in Salt Lake City, and how such participation furthers the Administration's stated goal of reducing drug use.

2) The names of all Department of Health and Human Services staff attending the August 19-20 Harm Reduction conference in Salt Lake City, and their contact information so we may conduct staff interviews.

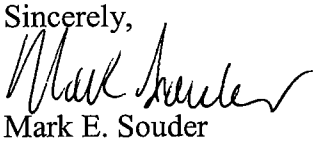
Please provide the following materials no later than 5:00pm Friday, August 26, 2005:

1) All documents relating to the Department of Health and Human Services' involvement, including its role as a primary sponsor, for the August 19-20 Harm Reduction conference in Salt Lake City. See the attachment for a full definition of "documents" and "relating to."

Mr. Secretary, I have steadily worked for enhanced treatment and prevention funding and expanded treatment options. I was the House sponsor of the Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act just signed by President Bush.[10] Treatment and prevention are not the issue here.

The issue is that the Administration has not yet put forth a strategy to address the meth epidemic, and your Department bears much of the responsibility for that failure. To procrastinate further while supporting the very people who advocate relaxed drug laws is unconscionable.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Souder
Chairman
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Government Reform Committee

Attachment: Definitions

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[10] Pub. L. 109-56 (August 2, 2005).

ATTACHMENT

1. The term "documents" is to be construed in the broadest sense and shall mean any written or graphic material, however produced or reproduced, of any kind or description, consisting of the original and any non-identical copy (whether different from the original because of notes made on or attached to such copy or otherwise) and drafts and both sides thereof, whether printed or recorded electronically or magnetically or stored in any type of data bank, including, but not limited to, the following: correspondence, memoranda, records, summaries of personal conversations or interviews, minutes or records of meetings or conferences, opinions or reports of consultants, projections, statistical statements, drafts, contracts, agreements, purchase orders, invoices, confirmations, telegraphs, telexes, agendas, books, notes, pamphlets, periodicals, reports, studies, evaluations, opinions, logs, diaries, desk calendars, appointment books, tape recordings, video recordings, e-mails, voice mails, computer tapes, or other computer stored matter, magnetic tapes, microfilm, microfiche, punch cards, all other records kept by electronic, photographic, or mechanical means, charts, photographs, notebooks, drawings, plans, inter-office communications, intra-office and intra-departmental communications, transcripts, checks and canceled checks, bank statements, ledgers, books, records or statements of accounts, and papers and things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated.

2. The terms "related to" or "relating to" means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, identifies, deals with, or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject, including but not limited to records concerning the preparation of other records.