



**Statement for the record of
Niki Crawford
First Sergeant
Indiana State Police
Methamphetamine Suppression Section Commander**

**Before the
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
House Committee on Science, Space and Technology
United States House of Representatives**

Meth Addiction: Using Science to Explore Solutions

September 18, 2013

Written Statement of Niki Crawford
First Sergeant
Indiana State Police
Methamphetamine Suppression Section Commander

Before the
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
House Committee on Science, Space and Technology
United States House of Representatives

Meth Addiction: Using Science to Explore Solutions

September 18, 2013

Chairman Bucshon, Ranking member Lipinski and distinguished subcommittee members, thank you for allowing the Indiana State Police to be here to present to you on exploring solutions to the manufacture of methamphetamine epidemic from a law enforcement perspective.

How has the meth manufacturing problem evolved in your state over the past 20 years? Has the number of meth users in your state declined? Where is the problem most serious in your state, and what efforts are being used to combat the problem?

Indiana, like most Midwestern states, has seen the methamphetamine manufacture problem grow over the years. Along with the rise in meth labs, meth use has also risen. As shown in Table 1, meth lab seizures in Indiana doubled each year from 1995 to 2000. The state initially reached a high of 1,137 labs in 2004. With the passage of Indiana Senate Enrolled act 444, which placed pseudoephedrine (PSE) products behind the counter and required an ID and log for its purchase, Indiana, like most other states, saw an initial drop in meth labs. However, it did not take long for those who intended to divert PSE from its legitimate use to the manufacture of meth, widely known as “smurfs,” to catch on to the weaknesses and loopholes of this law, and labs quickly began to rise again. The overall highest year for lab seizures was 2012 with 1,726 labs seized. 2013 is on track to surpass that number. With an average of 5 ½ labs per day, seizure numbers will likely exceed 1,900 labs in Indiana in 2013. One basic fact that is needed to understand the meth lab problem in Indiana is that our meth labs are fueled by addiction to the drug, not the quest for money. This dynamic makes the meth lab issue in most Midwestern states a unique problem where drug manufacturers and addicts have access to everything they need to feed their own addiction.

Labs have continued to rise due to the easy access to PSE products as well as evolving cook processes. Initially, Indiana saw many labs that utilized the red phosphorus and iodine method, which is a lengthier and more cumbersome process to manufacture the drug. However, because of the easy access to anhydrous ammonia in Indiana’s farming communities, the Birch Reduction method, which utilizes this common and inexpensive farm fertilizer, took over. In roughly 2005-2006, law enforcement in Indiana as well as other parts of the country began to see a modification to the Birch Reduction method. This modification has become widely known as the One Pot or Shake and Bake method of manufacturing where the entire meth “cook” is completed in a 20 ounce pop bottle, 2 liter pop bottle, glass jar or other homemade reaction vessel. As the cook processes that are most seen have evolved, the dangers associated with those labs have also evolved resulting in more injuries to both meth cooks and law enforcement officers (see Table 2). One pot labs now constitute nearly 90% of all labs seized in the state of Indiana (see

Table 3). Because this process is a much quicker, easier and smaller way to manufacture meth, it appeals to the meth addict in a way most other cook processes do not because they obtain the finished product much quicker, needing less PSE product to produce the methamphetamine and continuing to have easy access to all reagent chemicals utilized in the one pot cook process.

There is no one area of the state that has a more significant problem than another. Indiana's top ten counties are geographically located on the Kentucky border, the Michigan border, rural counties, urban counties, and various locations in between (see Appendix A for 2010-2012 lab seizure maps).

A variety of efforts across many disciplines have been utilized to combat the problem in Indiana. The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute started the Meth Free Indiana Coalition where various agencies involved in justice, prevention, and treatment all came together to share information and programs. This coalition is now part of Drug Free Indiana. The Indiana Department of Corrections started Clean Living is Freedom Forever (CLIFF), a treatment and counseling program for inmates preparing to transition back to society from incarceration for meth crimes. Indiana won a State Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant. In 2006 a working group was organized for this grant to better focus the resources in areas with the most need. Although the initial granting period is over, the working group continues its data gathering and focused prevention efforts to help allocate and request additional funding to continue its prevention programs.

In 2005 the Indiana State Police began the process of creating the Methamphetamine Suppression Section (MSS) to proactively combat meth crimes. While the ISP had always taken the lead in responding to and processing drug lab crime scenes, until that time, the personnel assigned to the clandestine lab team were specialty team members with other work responsibilities within the ISP. On January 16, 2006, MSS began operations with 23 personnel assigned full time to combat the growing meth problem in our state. Currently, MSS has 19 full time personnel and over one hundred additional clan lab certified sworn and civilian agency members who respond to clandestine lab crime scenes. While there are many local officers certified to process clandestine labs, the ISP responds to 97% of all labs seized in the state. ISP also provides the safety equipment and processing supplies needed to appropriately process these crime scenes in a manner compliant with OSHA, EPA, DOT and ISP policies and guidelines. MSS was formed with the focus of education, partnerships and enforcement. Education and partnerships are listed first because we know our enforcement efforts to combat this problem would be lacking the outcomes desired if we didn't educate the public and other public safety organizations as well as build partnerships with the stakeholders in our communities.

What are the specific technical tools that have been developed to monitor or limit the sale of over-the-counter PSE? What are some impediments that are making this problem difficult to solve? What are some ongoing efforts to make PSE tamper resistant, in order to prevent it from being made into meth?

As you can see in Table 1, labs have continued to grow at significant rates, even with additional restrictions placed on the sale and purchase of PSE products. In 2006 the Indiana State Police launched the Meth Watch program. This program was already operational in other Midwestern states that also had high instances of methamphetamine labs. This program focused on deterring meth cooks by educating retailers about the tracking requirements for PSE and the reagent chemicals used in the manufacturing process. Meth Watch kits consist of posters, signage, employee training materials and the required paper logs that were to be completed for each PSE sale. In 2008, the program

was expanded to include stickers and tamper tags for anhydrous ammonia tanks. These tags are used by farmers and Co-Ops for the purpose of tracking thefts of the fertilizer from nurse tanks. Delivering these kits and making contact with retailers, farmers and Co-Ops has created lasting partnerships that still exist today and are one of our greatest assets in obtaining information on the local manufacture of meth. However, the disappointment of the program is that the signs did not deter the smurfs and meth cooks from continuing to purchase the products necessary to manufacture meth.

In June of 2009 the Indiana State Police Meth Suppression Section launched the Indiana Meth Investigation System (IMIS). The front end of IMIS is an informational website designed to educate and provide information on items related to the clandestine production of methamphetamine, as well as give a reporting mechanism for meth lab tips directly to law enforcement from the public (www.meth.in.gov). On the back side of IMIS is a secure database that includes all clandestine lab seizure reports submitted to the system and provided to the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Seizure System at the El Paso Intelligence Center. IMIS also contains all of the PSE sales, blocks, inquiries, smurf groups and tips and leads received on meth production. The system came to Indiana and more than a dozen other states free of charge from the Tennessee Methamphetamine Task Force which developed the program with Federal grant dollars. The system was not mandatory for the reporting of the PSE sales; however, approximately 50% of all Indiana pharmacies voluntarily reported their PSE sales to IMIS. Although the ISP knew IMIS would not be a preventive measure, it did allow for a more efficient manner to report meth labs and investigate the illegal purchase of PSE products.

During the state legislative session in 2010, a bill was passed that required all Indiana retailers selling PSE products to submit their sales to the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx). NPLEx became fully operational in Indiana January 1, 2011. NPLEx was lobbied for under the pretext that it would prevent the illegal purchase of PSE products and, therefore, prevent meth labs. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, as labs have continued to rise. What investigators have found is that the electronic tracking of PSE purchases and the blocking of sales that would have put the purchaser over the legal limit actually hinders the investigative process. The meth cooks have simply expanded their smurf groups to include family, friends, co-workers, college students, the homeless and, most commonly, other meth addicts. The meth cooks pay between \$20 and \$100 for every box of PSE provided to them or they trade boxes of PSE for ½ gram of meth, which has a street value of \$50. The smurfs purchase the PSE products at legal levels, thus making it more difficult to parse out the suspicious sales from the legitimate sales.

At the request of the Caucus on International Narcotics Control in the US Senate, the strengths and weaknesses of various state laws regarding the sale of pseudoephedrine products (tracking versus controlled substance) were studied by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the official report was released in January of 2013 (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-204>).

There are a few PSE products being marketed as meth resistant. The technology focuses on the prevention of the extraction of PSE from the tablet and impeding the conversion of PSE to meth directly from the tablet. It is exciting to see pharmaceutical companies working on this technology, but there is still room for improvement. Of all of the samples provided to DEA, the chemists have been able to defeat the technology to some extent. To this point, no waivers to federal or state law have been granted for these products to exempt them from the tracking requirements.

How has meth contributed to a new wave in crime? Give some examples and trends that you have witnessed in your state.

Meth has contributed to a variety of different crimes. Many meth cooks and smurfs are also involved in other property crimes such as burglary and theft. However, the newest and most pervasive crime growth has been smurfing. In Indiana some meth cooks have very sophisticated criminal organizations centered on the purchase of PSE products. The meth cooks have "captains," "lieutenants," and "sergeants" that occupy a level within the organization to purchase and/or deliver the products from the bottom of the chain up to the top. Other meth cooks have solicited the services of family members to purchase their PSE products. Many use threats to persuade their elderly grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles to purchase PSE. We have had numerous reports from family members threatened with physical harm or property damage if they did not purchase certain products for the cook.

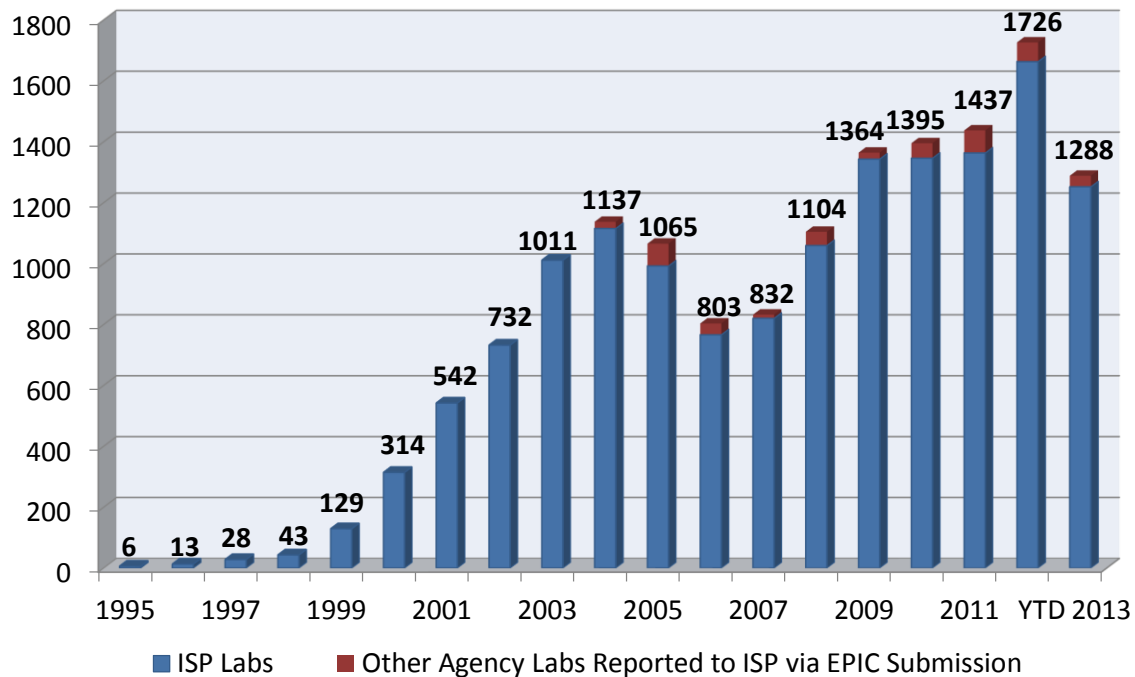
Table 4 shows that rates of arrest continue to increase. It is not uncommon for ISP personnel to document two to eight suspects at a clandestine meth lab crime scene. As shown in Table 5, not all identified suspects are arrested at the time of the lab, so it is important to show the difference between arrests reported and suspects who were identified. We believe this arrest data is a very good picture of the smurfing problem and how pervasive it is in Indiana: 1,529 suspects arrested or identified in 1,252 labs.

Smurfing also extends from PSE to the other reagent chemicals. As discussed earlier, boxes of pseudoephedrine products have become currency for meth cooks. They trade boxes for the drug or get cash in return. Undercover police officers working these cases know they cannot approach a meth cook and offer cash to buy meth. They must have boxes of PSE or other chemicals to trade, which puts law enforcement and prosecutors in a difficult position of providing precursors and chemicals to a meth cook that can turn those into more meth within an hour. Anyone at that location has now been placed in harm's way with exposure to chemical vapors, fires and explosions.

In addition, there is rampant child neglect, endangerment and abuse among the children being raised in these meth lab homes. Table 6 illustrates the growing number of children identified in homes or locations where meth labs have been seized. As the parents' addiction grows, the lack of supervision of their children also grows. Methamphetamine is a stimulant, and it is a sexual stimulant. Children are being sexually abused by both their parents as well as their parents' associates. Protecting children is a priority of Meth Suppression personnel who are trained each year on the Indiana Drug Endangered Child protocol and the reporting requirements of our state statute for children under the age of 18 found in meth labs.

The meth lab crisis is not an easy problem to solve, but this particular drug problem causes much deeper damage to people and communities than other drug crimes. Those of us in law enforcement who have chosen this route in our career know we will deal with drug endangered and abused children, theft, burglary, and violence. Communities are dealing with contaminated homes that can lead to illness of innocent parties, abandoned properties reducing property values, and fewer employable citizens to contribute to the economy. Until federal, state, and local leaders determine what steps are necessary to combat this problem, rest assured that law enforcement will remain on the front lines enforcing applicable laws and fighting for the safety of our children and communities.

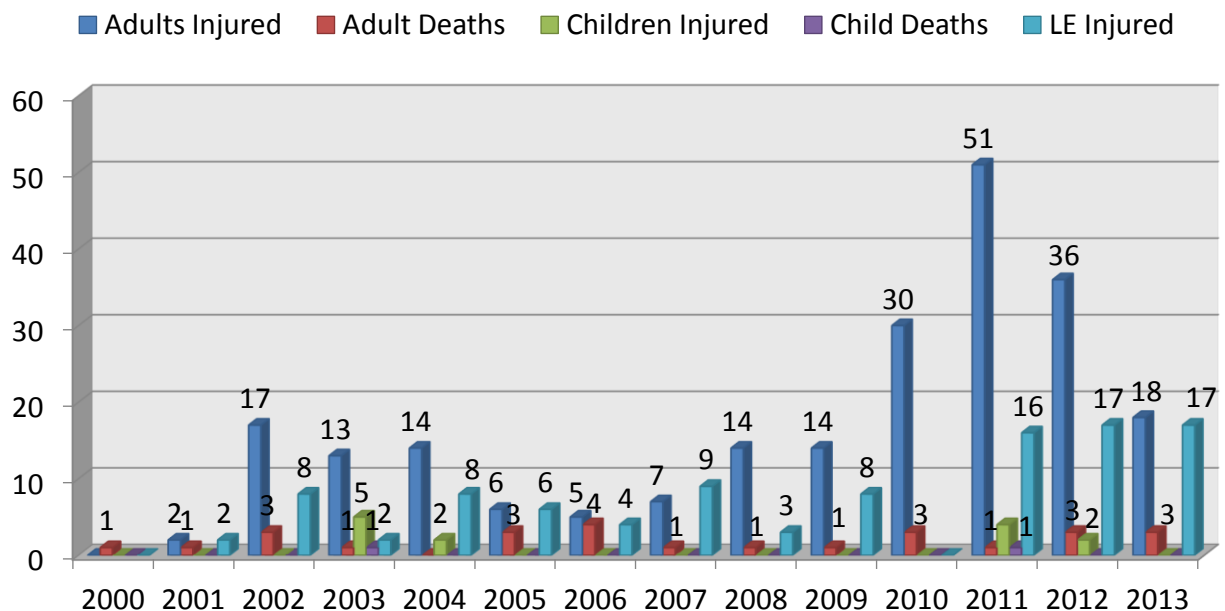
Indiana Law Enforcement Clandestine Lab Incidents 1995 - YTD 2013



All Agencies' lab seizures

Table 1

Indiana Meth Lab Injuries and Deaths 2000 - 2013



Adult Injuries:

227 total

Law Enforcement Injuries:

100 total

All Agencies' lab seizures

Adult Deaths (26):

Police Action Shooting: 3
Pursuit Crash: 2
Car Crash: 1
Suicide: 2
Fire/Explosion: 10
Homicide: 3
One Pot Explosion(no fire): 1
Overdose: 1
Other: 3

Child Deaths (2):

Fire: 1
Medical/Health: 1

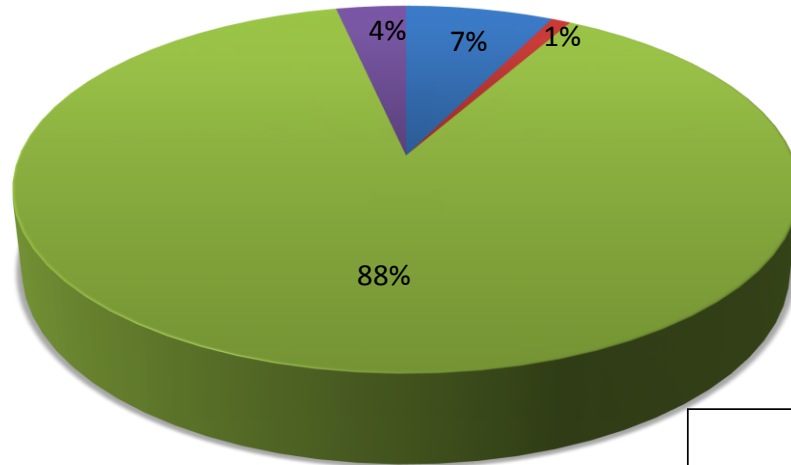
Child Injuries (13):

Fire: 7
Chemical Burns: 1
Exposure to Chemical Vapors: 4
Swallowed Chemical: 1

Table 2

Indiana State Police Lab Seizure Type 2013

■ Birch Reduction (Nazi)
 ■ Red Phosphorus
 ■ One Pot
 ■ Other/Unk



Year to Date:
08-31-2013

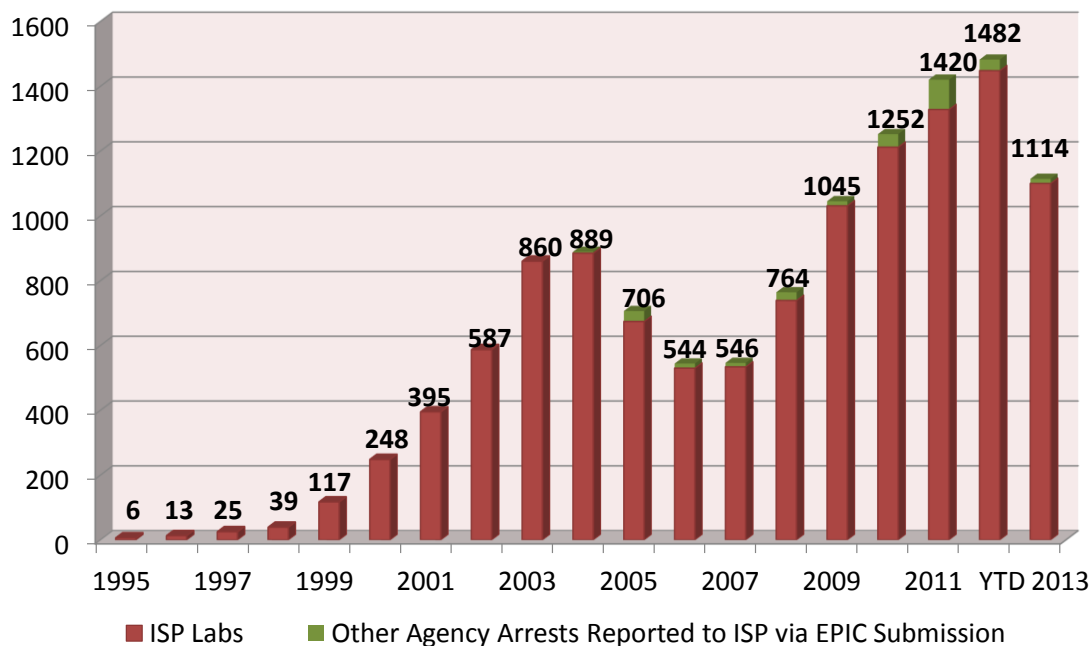
One Pot – 1,109*
 Birch Reduction – 91*
 Red Phosphorus – 12*
 Other/Unknown – 43

*lab seizures had two cook processes

ISP Lab Seizures Only

Table 3

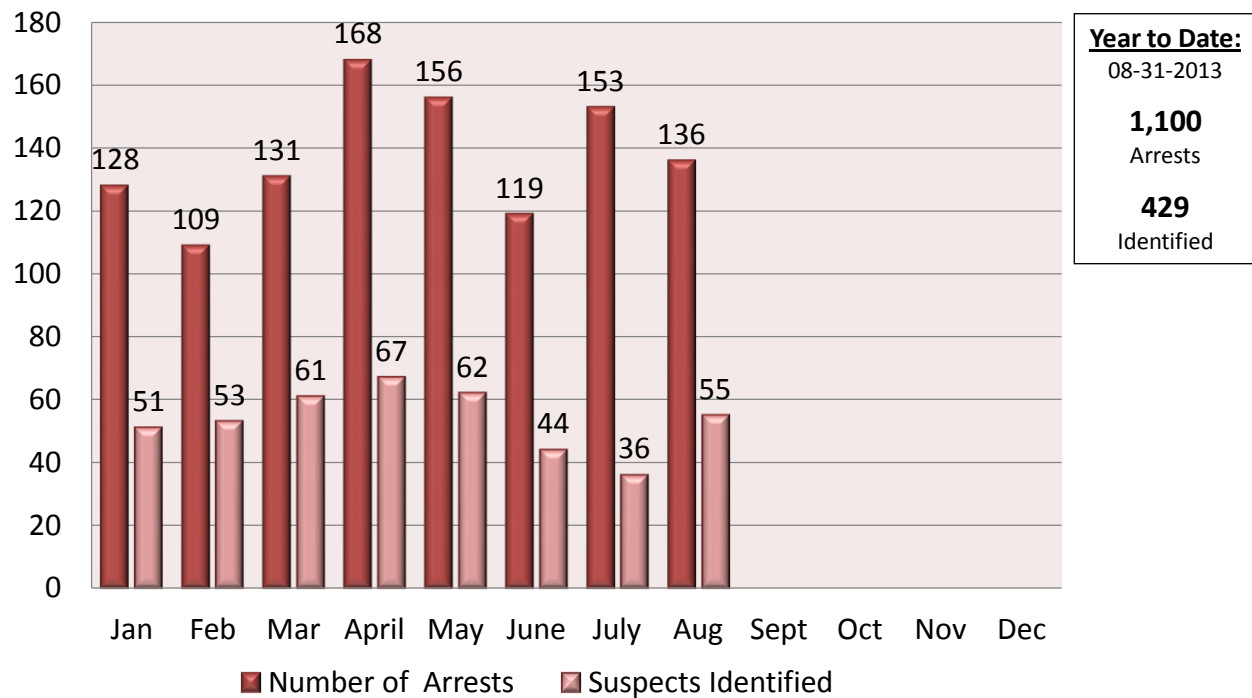
Indiana Law Enforcement Clandestine Lab Arrests 1995-2012



All Agencies' lab seizures

Table 4

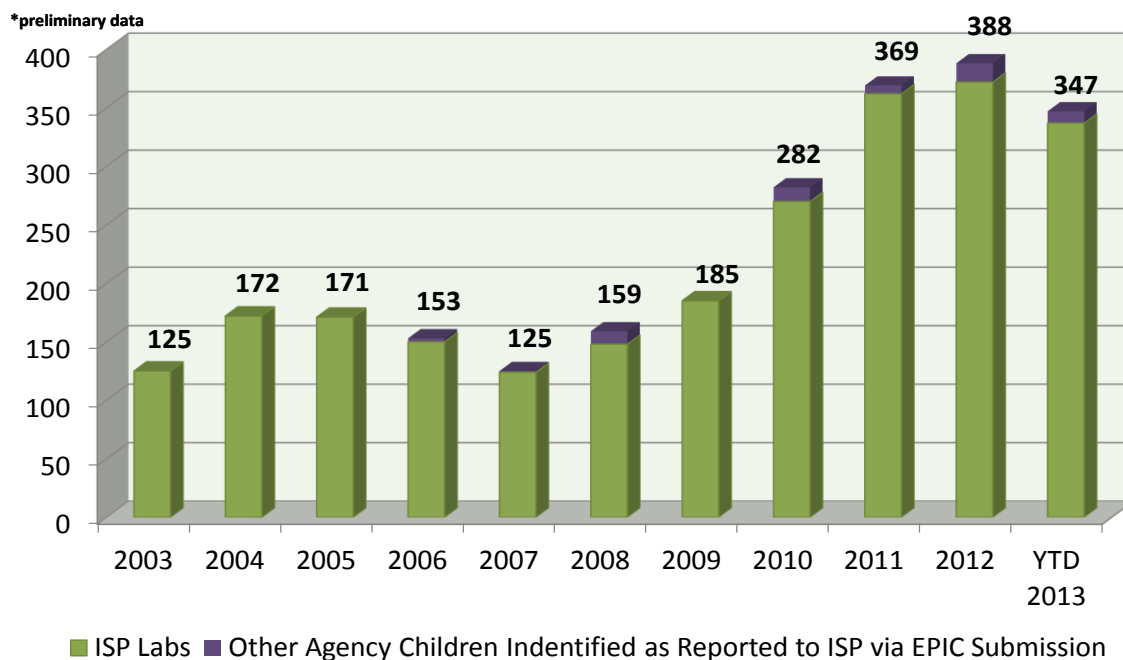
Indiana State Police Clandestine Lab Arrests & Suspects Identified But Not Arrested at Time of Lab - 2013



ISP Lab Seizures Only

Table 5

Indiana Law Enforcement Children Identified in Clandestine Lab Environments 2003 - 2012



All Agencies' lab seizures

Table 6

Appendix A

