

# Meth 'Has Come Back With A Vengeance' In Colorado

By Ben Markus  
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For 10 years Hunter Hobbs was a heroin user. That's what was big in North Carolina where he's from. Then he moved to Colorado, where methamphetamine was more widespread.

"It was everywhere, and it was very easy to get," Hobbs said. "I would buy other drugs and the person I was buying them from would provide meth as well, just kind of give it to me."

Meth is cheap. Hobbs has been sober for years now, but back when he did use, it only cost \$20 to buy about a gram, enough for a day's use. Today, he can see that Denver's problem is getting worse just walking around downtown. It's easy for him to spot the behavior. He can see it in the way a person moves or carries themselves.

"I can see it from a mile away," Hobbs said.

Meth hasn't **grabbed headlines like opioids** have, but it has flooded cities throughout the Southwest over the last five years. Law enforcement now says the region is in the midst of a meth crisis. Denver Police reported 1,468 possession arrests in 2018, a 217 percent spike since 2014. Meth possession arrests outnumber cocaine and heroin arrests combined in the city.

"The methamphetamine problem has come back with a vengeance," said Jason Dunn, Colorado's U.S. Attorney.

Dunn said methamphetamine is coming across the border from Mexico, carried by cartels. In fact, the cartels have gotten so good at production they've put domestic labs out of business. The cartels can utilize a global supply chain, import vast quantities of precursor chemicals from China and pump out meth on an industrial scale.

Law enforcement and the Mexican government have actually had some successes in taking down "huge production facilities," Dunn said, but it hasn't made a difference. Authorities have seen "no increase in price on the street in the U.S., or a drop in quantity."