



## PIC QUESTION OF THE WEEK: 10/02/06

Q: What are the provisions of the Combat Methamphetamine Act of 2005?

A: The Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 (CMEA) was signed into law on March 9, 2006 to standardize the over-the counter (OTC) sale of products containing pseudoephedrine. The provisions of the CMEA are quite stringent and include several requirements including employee training. This act was passed because pseudoephedrine serves as a precursor for the synthesis of methamphetamine. Cough, cold, and allergy medications are the most accessible source of pseudoephedrine used in the illegal production of methamphetamine. Before passage of the CMEA, it was quite easy to obtain pseudoephedrine and synthesize methamphetamine. The process was conducted in what are referred to as “small toxic labs” or “meth labs”. There has been a significant decrease in the illicit production of methamphetamine since approval of this act. Methamphetamine or “meth” is highly addictive and its production, distribution, and abuse have become a national challenge. In July 2006, the National Association of Counties Survey concluded that methamphetamine is the number one drug-related problem for local law enforcement agencies. One condition of the new regulations is that pseudoephedrine containing compounds must be stored in a locked cabinet or behind the pharmacy counter. Customers who seek to purchase medications containing pseudoephedrine must provide photo identification (ID) issued by the government (e.g. driver’s license, etc.). The lone exception to this requirement is the purchase of a product containing 60 mg or less of pseudoephedrine (one 60 mg tablet or two 30 mg tablets). Employees selling the medication must log the name of the product and quantity sold in a logbook. The customer is then required to enter their name (which must match the ID), address, date, and time of the sale. Finally, the customer must sign the logbook. These records must be maintained for a minimum of two years. The *daily* sales limit of pseudoephedrine is 3.6 grams and the total amount a customer may purchase *per month* is 9 grams. As an example, CLARITIN-D 24 HOUR<sup>®</sup> contains 240 mg pseudoephedrine sulfate per tablet. The maximum a customer may purchase in one day would be 15 tablets (3.6 g). CLARITIN-D 12 HOUR<sup>®</sup> contains 120 mg pseudoephedrine sulfate per tablet; therefore, the maximum daily sale would be 30 tablets (3.6 g). By September 30, 2006, all retailers of pseudoephedrine-containing products must be “self-certified” and fully compliant with the above requirements. The self-certification process can be completed at [www.DEAdiversion.usdoj.gov](http://www.DEAdiversion.usdoj.gov).

### Reference:

- New rules for the sale of pseudoephedrine and other methamphetamine precursors. Pharmacist’s Letter/Prescriber’s Letter 2006;22(4):220413.
- Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration. The Combat Meth Act of 2005. [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/meth/q\\_a.htm](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/meth/q_a.htm) (accessed 2006 Sep 28).

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