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Follow up drug prevention schemes

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Drug prevention programs are aplenty. We have tried all sorts of ways to convince young people and adults not to take illegal drugs and abuse prescription drugs.

And next year, Oklahoma will try another, the Crystal Darkness Oklahoma campaign, a program to discourage the use of methamphetamine.

Like most illegal drugs, meth is highly addictive, debilitating and disabling. We certainly need to continue attacking the problem, and any program should incorporate not only prevention, but also early intervention and treatment for the best results.

The coming meth program revolves around a 30-minute documentary to be aired on Oklahoma TV stations Jan. 13. According to news reports, state officials "hope it will be accompanied by community watch parties that will raise public awareness of the dangers of meth."

Obviously, the reason officials are announcing the campaign now is so that communities can plan for these watch parties and ensure that the people who need them most attend. Once there, intervention and treatment can be offered.

So now's the time to begin laying the groundwork. Otherwise, the campaign will be only one more well-intended program whose results are lacking or questionable.

The latest report from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health reports about 8 percent of Oklahomans 12 years old and older used drugs in the last month. The rate is highest, 18 percent, for those between 18 and 25. Those are dangerous numbers, and we must warn all those involved in drugs of the dangers.

But if a warning was all it took, we wouldn't have the extensive problems we have. We need to ensure immediate intervention and treatment opportunities accompany any prevention program.