

Counselors Say There Isn't Enough Money, Resources

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HONOLULU -- Gov. Linda Lingle vowed to tackle Hawaii's crystal methamphetamine, or ice, epidemic in her State of the State speech Monday. However, is she willing to put enough money into the fight?

KITV 4 News reporter Daryl Huff talked with a national expert about what the ice war could really cost.

Some lawmakers said the governor's plan is \$20 million short of what is needed. The man who runs the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic in San Francisco said that still may not be enough.

"I do believe that Hawaii has the No. 1 methamphetamine problem in the world right now," said Darryl Inaba, who was brought in to train about 150 Hawaii drug treatment providers, telling them the latest about how ice affects users.

"So it sort of cuts your brain off from all your feelings tasks and everything around you," Inaba said.

He said Hawaii isn't facing up to the problem.

"There's an estimate of 30,000 Hawaiians having problems with ice. You have treatment slots for only a couple thousand people. How is that going to help anything?" Inaba said.

That message is not new to local drug counselors.

"(What) many of us in the treatment field have been talking about, and jumping up and down about, and waving our arms about for many, many years is that there aren't enough resources here," counselor Bonnie Cordeiro said.

Democratic legislators want the state to add \$21 million to the treatment budget right away. The governor isn't willing to spend that much, instead emphasizing better coordination, more prison space and law enforcement.

"Treatment is so much cheaper than putting them in jail. The criminal justice system is letting them run around out there," Inaba said.

If the state paid to treat every addict in Hawaii, it could cost \$90 million or more. That's five times what the state is spending now.