

Advancing Change on a Broad Scale

This issue of *TASC News & Views* is dedicated to the broad-level strategies and activities that affect the people and communities we serve.

In TASC's mission to create a more healthy, safe, and just society, we collaborate with a wide variety of partners who share this purpose and whose daily decisions and actions help advance social as well as individual change.

On a direct service level, TASC provides case management to help people overcome drug problems and other debilitating issues. We do this by working with corrections, criminal justice, child welfare, and public health

agencies and community-based service partners to help individuals and families make positive and lasting changes in their lives.

On a systems level, TASC uses what we learn from our clinical practice and service delivery to recommend solutions that can be applied on a much broader scale. We work with local, state, and national partners to shape the social structures and public policies that affect the people and communities we serve. This includes playing active roles in community outreach, systems planning, resource advocacy for treatment and recovery, research, training, media outreach, and more.

Because change on a broad scale is central to TASC's purpose, we have recently launched our Center for Health and Justice (CHJ), which provides research, public policy, training, and consultation services.

Please see the enclosed insert to learn more about CHJ and its newly released report, *No Entry: Improving Public Safety through Cost-Effective Alternatives to Incarceration in Illinois*.



TASC & CHJ President Melody Heaps speaks at a press conference in Springfield launching CHJ's *No Entry* report.

TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is an independent, statewide, nonprofit agency that helps people transition beyond their involvement in criminal justice systems and government programs, and into health and self-sufficiency in the community. Adults and youth who have drug problems or other difficulties are referred to TASC by courts, corrections, child welfare, and other Illinois government service systems, and TASC manages their access to community-based treatment and support. In addition, through research, public policy advocacy, training, and consultation, TASC works to improve the social factors that affect our clients and communities. **Visit us online at www.tasc.org.**

Sheridan Correctional Center and TASC featured on National PBS Program

A recent episode of the national PBS program "NOW with David Brancaccio" features Illinois' Sheridan Correctional Center — a model of considerable interest for California and other states facing prison overcrowding and high recidivism rates.

As Brancaccio explains, the Sheridan program "doesn't end at the prison gates, but continues through the entire parole process, which is at least months, but could be years." TASC and a team of community-based service providers work under the leadership of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to ensure that individuals receive the clinical services, job training, and supervision they need, not only while they are incarcerated, but particularly after they are released.

NOW follows three participants (each at different points in the Sheridan program) and includes interviews with Warden Michael Rothwell, IDOC Assistant Director Deanne Benos, and TASC Recovery Support Services Coordinator Tommie Johnson.

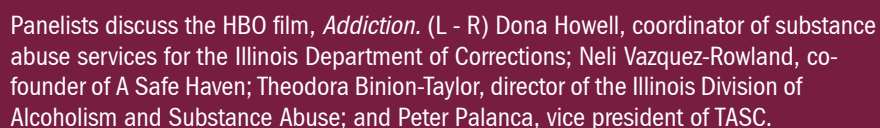
To view the full program or download a podcast or written transcript, go to www.pbs.org/now/shows/322/index.html

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More than 300 students and parents gathered at York High School to discuss solutions to underage drinking.

www.hbo.com/addiction/.



What Is the Center for Health and Justice at TASC?

The Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC seeks to connect research and practice in ways that create healthy and safe communities.

To do this, CHJ works in cooperation with health and justice experts and community leaders to identify potential improvements in programs, practices, and systems. We conduct research, convene decision makers, and offer training and consultation services. Currently, CHJ's focus is on issues

related to the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders, primarily as they affect individuals in or at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system.

For more information on CHJ and its reports and upcoming initiatives, visit www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.



Springfield Press Conference Launches Center for Health and Justice and *No Entry* Report

Leaders from the newly established Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC joined Illinois House and Senate lawmakers, numerous treatment providers, and other supporters at a press conference in Springfield, Illinois in May to launch CHJ's newest report, *No Entry: Improving Public Safety through Cost-Effective Alternatives to Incarceration in Illinois*.

State Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago), State Representative William Delgado (D-Chicago), and State Senator Donne Trotter (D-Chicago) spoke in support of the report's proposed policy changes and encouraged other lawmakers to approve an initial down payment of \$10 million to provide treatment for 2,200 non-violent, drug-involved offenders.

"New and harsher prison penalties have successfully emptied communities of sons and daughters, filled prisons with non-violent, drug-involved offenders, and returned them untreated to their communities, only to repeat their experience," said Melody Heaps, president of TASC and CHJ. "Our plan breaks the cycle," she said. (See report excerpt, next page).



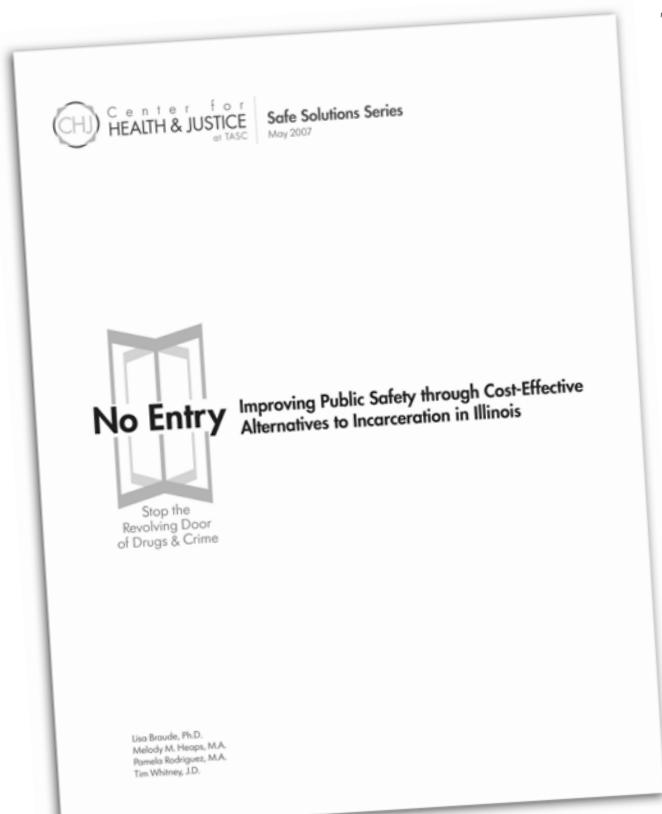
(L - R) State Senator Mattie Hunter, TASC & CHJ President Melody Heaps, State Senator Donne Trotter, and State Representative William Delgado at the press conference in Springfield.



Abbie Alford of WCFN-Springfield interviews Director of the Sangamon County Adult Probation Department Michael Torchia (left) and TASC Administrator Kent Holsopple.

No Entry: Improving Public Safety through Cost-Effective Alternatives to Incarceration in Illinois

Excerpt from new report by the Center for Health and Justice at TASC



The United States has a rate of criminal justice involvement far higher than any in the world, with more than seven million individuals under some form of justice supervision at any given time. Illicit drug use has played a primary role in the population explosion within the American justice system.

The fundamental problem is that we send non-violent, drug-involved offenders to prison when there are more effective and cost-efficient alternatives available.

The Center for Health and Justice at TASC proposes a public policy strategy of *No Entry*, which is designed to reverse the flow of drug-involved individuals going into and through the criminal justice system. *No Entry* involves structured, clinical interventions at every phase of justice involvement to address offender drug use and related criminal behavior, promoting public safety and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

Six core principles guide a *No Entry* paradigm and are critical in the development of public policy to stop the recurring cycle of drug use and crime (see inset below).

For a complete copy of the report and recommendations, visit www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

Principles of *No Entry*

Principle I: Public policies must recognize addiction as a brain disease. They must reflect a scientific understanding of the physiological and psychological nature of addiction as well as an understanding of the value of treatment and recovery support mechanisms.

Principle II: Public policies must acknowledge the link between drug use and criminal behavior. To stop the cycle of drug use and crime, the underlying drug use must be addressed.

Principle III: Public policies must reverse the devastating impact of current laws, strategies, and practices

that disproportionately harm minority communities. They must consider the implications of policies that perpetuate disparities, and work to reverse the undue impact to certain communities and groups of people.

Principle IV: Public policies must bring sentencing statutes in line with an equitable dispensation of justice. They must promote rather than discourage involvement in treatment alternatives, and they must abandon arbitrary penalty classifications that result in unnecessarily harsh sentences which debilitate families and communities throughout Illinois.

Principle V: Public policies must provide taxpayers with a return on their investment in public safety and public health. They must result not only in greater levels of public safety, but must also represent the wise use of taxpayer dollars.

Principle VI: Public policies must recognize voter support for treatment alternatives to incarceration. They must acknowledge that “smart on crime” indeed is also “tough on crime” and that the public sees the social and fiscal value of treatment as an alternative to incarceration.

Stopping Cycles of Drugs and Crime

A Judge's Perspective

In a recent interview with TASC, Presiding Judge of the Cook County Criminal Division Paul P. Biebel, Jr. shared his perspectives on the Cook County courts and strategies used to help interrupt cycles of drug use and crime.

TASC: What are some of the trends you've seen, particularly with regard to drug-involved offenders?

Judge Biebel: There are a large number of people that are coming through our criminal justice system as a result of drug use or mental health issues. Statistics show that a much larger percentage of people in the criminal justice system have problems with drug use, mental illness, or co-occurring issues of mental illness and drug use than you would find in the general population.

What we often see are individuals using drugs because they are seeking to escape from the conditions they are in or the issues that they possess. And we tend to see these individuals again and again if their issues of mental illness or drug abuse are not adequately addressed.

These realities place a significant burden on courts and other criminal justice resources in both the number of cases that come through the system and the time and personnel dedicated to these cases.

TASC: What are some of the strategies and programs that the Cook County court system has put in place to deal with drug-using offenders?

Judge Biebel: Cook County has been extremely innovative in creating partnerships among agencies within the court system (such as the judiciary, the sheriff, state's attorney, public defender, and probation) and organizations outside the traditional criminal justice system (such as drug and mental health treatment providers, TASC, and various community groups).

Programs such as the Cook County State's Attorney's Drug Abuse Program, commonly known as Drug School; the Cook County Sheriff's Boot Camp and Women's Justice Services; specialized drug and mental health courts; intensive probation; and TASC-monitored probation help offenders deal with their substance abuse issues and reduce the risk of re-offense. These programs are available at different points in the criminal justice process and help interrupt drug use and crime before they turn into bigger problems.

For example, Drug School deals with over 4,000 cases each year. The state's attorneys will tell you that even if someone doesn't finish the program, the fact that they are in it will help reduce recidivism. The longer they stay in the program the greater the chance that they won't recidivate.

Diversion programs such as Drug School are important because if people can be diverted from the criminal justice system, particularly their first time in, they won't be saddled with a record that could make it difficult to get jobs or go to college. Instead, an opportunity is provided to better understand issues related to drug use and an incentive is offered to help people deal with these problems and ultimately move on with their lives.

TASC: What's working? What would you like to see more of?

Judge Biebel: All these programs are working, and the reason why they are working is because all the partners work together.

There are no turf wars going on between and among the various agencies. And TASC is kind of a partner with everybody, being involved with evaluations, and ultimately helping with placement and housing and things like that. These are complicated issues that affect some communities very significantly and what we're trying to do is give people who want it the chance to change for the better.



Presiding Judge of the Cook County Criminal Division Paul P. Biebel, Jr.

As time goes on, we continue to look at adding to or improving these programs by keeping them current with what research and practice have proven works. For example, we're working with systems in New York to learn more about addressing issues of homelessness and how you deal with housing. Housing is a big issue. Making sure that individuals with drug or mental health disorders are in safe housing will only help toward building the success of our programs. Also, focusing on job training and education is important. Improving chances of returning to school, getting a GED, or a job helps everyone — the individuals in the program, their families, and their communities, too.

TASC: What can we do as citizens, family members, community leaders, judges, service providers, educators, policymakers, etc.?

Judge Biebel: There has to be a realization of the pervasiveness of this problem and the importance of intervening as early and as effectively as possible. Continuing to educate around this issue is key, so that when money is short the policymakers who are providing the budgets for these agencies will understand that these are worthwhile and beneficial programs, from a human standpoint and from an economic standpoint as well.

We all need to look into what we can do in terms of understanding these issues more thoroughly and passing that understanding along to others.

A No Entry Program Example: State's Attorney's Drug Abuse Program

The Cook County State's Attorney's Drug Abuse Program (SADAP), commonly known as Drug School, is an example of the practical application of a *No Entry* approach. The program identifies and intervenes with drug-involved offenders before they become a burden on the criminal justice system and taxpayers.

SADAP places first-time, low-level drug offenders in drug education sessions as an alternative to a felony conviction or jail time. Participants learn how drug abuse harms their health, and how a felony conviction hurts their family, their community, and their future. After successful completion of the program, participants may quickly expunge criminal charges related to their case. Those not completing SADAP are rerouted to traditional court, which is far more time-consuming and expensive for the criminal justice system.

Cook County diverts over 4,000 cases each year to SADAP. According to the State's Attorney's Office, of the individuals who register for the program, 80 to 90 percent complete Drug School, and 83 percent of these had no further arrests for drug crimes in the three years following program completion.

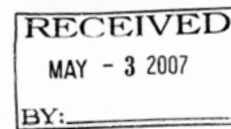
The average individual cost for SADAP, from beginning to end, is \$153¹. By comparison, the estimated cost of prosecution per individual is \$652, not including costs associated with trial, police testimony, or sentences of probation or supervision. Very conservatively, Drug School saves Cook County \$499 per client.²

Across the state, TASC and its partners continue to educate others on the benefits of diversionary programs such as SADAP. If you are interested in starting a drug school in your area, contact your local TASC

administrator. A list of TASC administrators can be found at www.tasc-il.org/preview/Contact.html#regionaloffices.

Below are excerpts from a letter TASC received from a client who completed the SADAP program.

Ms. Melody Heaps
TASC
1500 N. Halsted St.
Chicago, IL 60622



Dear Ms. Heaps,

I recently went through the TASC States Attorney drug school program for a drug possession case. Being arrested, jailed, and charged with this crime was the single most traumatic nightmare that I have ever been through...

Two of your employees; Angela Ellis and Cathy DelGado made all the difference in the world to me while guiding me through this process. Upon completion of my classes with Gateway, Angela advised me of my options, including the possibility of motioning my case forward. I had no idea that this was an option for me, and because my case was scheduled for June 29th, I was relieved and anxious to do so.

I am a manager in the Hotel & Real Estate market and, unfortunately have been unemployed for over a year. Knowing that "charges pending" on my record would probably prevent me from getting employment until the charges were dismissed, had me feeling even more hopeless with regard to my career and financial situation.

Angela put me in touch with Cathy DelGado to assist me with this process. Cathy took me from department to department and personally made sure that my papers were in order. She then met me on my court date, met with the States Attorneys and personally made sure that everything was in order as the Judge dismissed my case. I am filing my expungement next week. I want to commend both Ms. Ellis and Ms. DelGado on their wonderful work in not only assisting me with the physical paperwork, but for providing emotional support as well. They are really terrific and are a great asset to your organization!

I have had a very rough couple of years with my unemployment situation, and began to drift into substance abuse while trying to deal with everything. The arrest was the wake up call I needed to get clean and your program really helped me start a new life. I want Cathy and Angela to know that they really made a difference. You have a wonderful program. Thanks again!

Very best Regards,

¹ Averages based on 2001-2005 enrollments.

² 1-year drug re-arrest rates of unsuccessful participants are approximately 51%, compared to just 10% for successful participants.

National Recovery Month Web Series: Illinois Experts Featured



"Man of Focus," an online article in the Chicago Reporter's recent *Children of the Incarcerated* series, covers Andrew Atchison's journey toward positive change after his release from the Sheridan Correctional Center. Today, he owns and operates a barbershop and remodeling service and runs a gym for youth in Chicago's Englewood community. In the words of Andrew's former TASC clinical reentry case manager, Brian Drummond, "He had a spark, he just needed a focus. He is that focused man today."

To read the article, visit www.chicagoreporter.com/2007/3-2007/profiles/focus.htm

To find a regional office in Illinois near you
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TASC Leader Receives National Appointment

Pamela Rodriguez, executive vice president of TASC, was named one of nine juvenile justice experts across the nation to serve on the federal Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The council is an independent organization in the U.S. executive branch that coordinates all federal juvenile delinquency prevention and detention programs. Ms. Rodriguez was appointed to the council because of her longtime advocacy on behalf of youth who are involved in juvenile justice and child welfare systems.



TASC receives significant funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA).

TASC is licensed by DASA and the Illinois Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

Save the Date

**TASC's 2007
Leadership Award Luncheon
Celebrating 30 Years**

Wednesday, September 19, 2007
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Hotel InterContinental
505 N. Michigan Ave. • Grand Ballroom

**If you would like to donate to TASC's
Leadership Award Luncheon,
please send contributions to:**

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(312) 573-8223 • ssheridan@tasc-il.org

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