

TASC Reports

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Public Discussion, Support of Treatment and Recovery Increasing

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Over the past several months, the national dialogue on treatment and recovery has been enhanced by the significant contributions of prominent state and national leaders. Both President George W. Bush and Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich have spoken publicly in favor of treatment and recovery programs. In President Bush's State of the Union address in January, he called upon the nation to support his \$600 million program that targets an additional 300,000 Americans to receive treatment over the next three years. In his deficit-reducing FY 2004 budget, Blagojevich not only proposed maintaining the funding for prevention and treatment, he also called for the reopening of the Sheridan Correctional Center as a national model of drug treatment for offenders.

Findings by those dealing directly with drug and alcohol disease are helping to inform decision makers at both the state and national levels. For example, a report released in April, by a national policy panel convened by Join Together, a project of Boston University School of Public Health, found that, "there is growing recognition and acceptance of the fact that addiction is a chronic illness, and that public and private policies should be modified to allow people with alcohol or other drug disease to receive treatment and recovery support at parity with that available to people with other chronic illnesses."

The Join Together panel included among others a former U.S. Attorney General, the past president of the American Medical Association, physicians, attorneys, and labor and business executives. It was formed in the spring of 2002 to address legally sanctioned discrimination that, for example, authorizes job dismissal, insurance refusal, and permanent barring from federally-assisted housing for individuals seeking treatment or recovery from alcohol or other drug disease. Based on written and oral testimony from expert witnesses across the country, the panel wrote the report, "Ending Discrimination Against People with Alcohol and Drug Problems." Its two guiding principles are that addiction is a public health problem, and that public and private policies that impede treatment and recovery should be removed.

In Illinois, 85 percent of Illinois voters agree that addiction is a public health problem better handled by prevention and treatment than the criminal justice system. These findings are based on a survey of 500 likely voters conducted last fall by Fako & Associates of Lemont, Ill., for the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA). The survey also found that 95 percent of voters recognize drug and alcohol addiction as a pervasive illness that affects all levels of society, and three-fourths agree that over time, the brain chemistry



The year's achievers were awarded plaques at the Winners' Circle 2002 Holiday Celebration.

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Palanca Joins TASC Executive Team




Peter Palanca, a long-time leader in substance abuse prevention, treatment, and training in both the public and private sectors, has joined TASC's executive team as vice president of operations. In this capacity, he oversees TASC client services which reach more than 30,000 individuals annually across Illinois.

"Peter's experience in program development and administration, training, and strategic planning, along

with his extensive background in clinical services, will be valuable assets to TASC as we continue to grow as an organization," said TASC President Melody M. Heaps.

Prior to joining TASC, Peter served as executive director of Hazelden Chicago, a provider of education and treatment services to adolescents, adults, and families affected by alcohol and drug disease. He has also served as deputy director of the Illinois Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and as director of several substance abuse treatment programs in suburban Chicago. In addition, he has served as a university lecturer in the College of Health Professions at Governors State University since 1979.

Peter joins TASC's executive team of Melody M. Heaps, president; Pamela F. Rodriguez, executive vice president; and Roy Fesmire, vice president and CFO. 

Retreat Builds Leadership Skills

Restoring Citizenship, a TASC peer-led and peer-driven recovery service project, recently hosted a leadership retreat for members of TASC's Winners' Circle (WC). Funded by a five-year grant from the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), the project is designed to aid its members with issues found in early recovery and re-entry, and to help move them toward full community involvement.

Twenty-four participants in recovery from substance use disorders, the majority of whom are also ex-offenders, and five staff members from TASC attended the retreat held at the Starved Rock Lodge and Convention

Center near Utica, Illinois. The group participated in a series of seminars, round table discussions, and strategizing sessions that focused on leadership development training and goals for the coming year.

"Together we are building something important."
Timothy Bell
Retreat Participant

Mark Sanders, a nationally-recognized motivational speaker, provided training in the basics of leadership. Robert Carty, deputy director of operations at TASC, and Jerome Collins, project supervisor, facilitated discussions on ethical values and how they relate to the ongoing mission of the program.

"The retreat was a huge success, as evidenced by the number of members

Continued on page 4

TASC Videoconferencing Project Sponsored by SBC Excelerator Grant

TASC has implemented videoconferencing in several offices across the state, thanks to an SBC Excelerator grant awarded in September 2002. The new technology allows TASC to share clinical, administrative, and technical expertise in a more time-efficient and cost-effective manner.

Over the past six months, TASC information systems staff have installed video conferencing equipment including monitors, cameras, microphones, and remote control devices, in a number of offices across the state. Meetings

Client Spotlight



Lorraine Russ, Recovery Coach Program Client

“I am going to continue being a mom,” Lorraine Russ said as she spoke proudly about her three children. But until recently, the idea of parenting created anxiety for Lorraine. On May 1, 2000, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) took Lorraine’s children into custody because she was using drugs. “I just kept going into their empty rooms and crying,” said Lorraine.

After that day, Lorraine said she saw the damage that using drugs had inflicted on her life. She started a treatment program and in October 2000, Lorraine began to work for JCPenney. As she progressed in her recovery and became self-sufficient, Lorraine shifted her focus to her children’s return.

The reunification process is a difficult one, especially for those who are trying to

previously held at the TASC administrative office are now being held on video at several offices simultaneously, cutting down on travel expense and time away from area offices. In the future, TASC hopes to utilize videoconferencing capabilities for statewide client meetings and other clinical services.

SBC’s multi-million-dollar grant initiative is aimed at connecting underserved communities with advanced technologies. SBC Excelerator is a trademark of SBC Communications Inc. 

maintain their abstinence from alcohol and other drugs. Lorraine’s TASC Recovery Coach, Patricia Green, knows this is true. “During the process of trying to get their kids back, they are also working to maintain their sobriety, they are in counseling, and they are going to work every day – it can be really overwhelming,” said Patricia. The TASC Recovery Coach Program, funded by DCFS, recognizes the needs of these clients and works to improve their treatment outcomes in addition to helping them navigate the reunification process.


Lorraine knew she wanted her children home, but they had been away for so long that she was nervous about their homecoming. “I felt like I had let my children down,” said Lorraine. Patricia was there to help guide her through the reunification process. “That’s the reason I was there – to ensure things went smoothly, like an advocate,” said Patricia.

“TASC’s open-door policy was great – I knew that I had a network of support behind me,” said Lorraine. “Pat and I have had a two-year constant relationship that we expect to continue.”



TASC’s Interface Committee meets via the new videoconferencing equipment from SBC

SBC Excelerator
IMPROVING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Lorraine continues to work at JCPenney, where she has been promoted three times. She hopes to become a first time homeowner sometime this summer. But, most importantly, she has her children back in her life. “I’m a mom now,” she said. 

TASCReports

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Administrative Offices, Area I

1500 N. Halsted St.
Chicago, IL 60622
(312) 787-0208

www.illinoistasc.org

Area Offices:

II-Rockford (815) 965-1106
III-Rock Island (309) 788-0816
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Contributors

Daphne Baille, Beth Looney,
Amy Sue Mertens, Laurel Parker

Comments or Suggestions

Please forward to Amy Sue Mertens
Manager of Communications (312) 573-8223
fax (312) 787-9663 or
e-mail amertens@tascil.org

TASC receives significant funding from the Illinois Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse.

TASC Announces Annual Giving Campaign


TASC's annual giving campaign is underway, culminating June 30 with the 2003 Leadership Award Luncheon honoring Congressman Danny K. Davis. The campaign supports TASC programs and services across Illinois.

To support the campaign as a sponsor at \$500 or benefactor at \$1,000, please contact AmySue Mertens at (312) 573-8223. Supporters at sponsor

and benefactor levels receive tickets to the luncheon as well as recognition in the program and TASC's newsletter.

Tickets to the luncheon are available for \$125, as are \$5 tickets for the raffle. The raffle features a grand prize of round-trip airfare from anywhere, to anywhere Southwest flies, and boasts three Chicago packages filled with hotel stays and neighborhood attraction passes, as well as

a sports package including Blackhawk and Bulls tickets.

Please join TASC, national and state legislators, corporations, and area organizations in honoring Congressman Davis on June 30 at the Hotel Inter-Continental, 505 N. Michigan Avenue in Chicago. For more information, call (312) 573-8210 or for an on-line invitation, visit www.illinoistasc.org. 

TASC would like to thank the following for their contributions to the 2003 Leadership Award Luncheon Raffle:

Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum
 Chicago Blackhawks Hockey Team, Inc.
 Chicago Bulls
 Chicago Rush Arena Football
 Fleet Feet Sports
 Hilton Chicago
 Homan Square Cafe

Hotel Inter-Continental
 ImprovOlympic
 Marcello's Father and Son Restaurant
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 The Museum of Science and Industry
 Papagus
 Radiance Yoga & Wellness

Shedd Aquarium
 Southwest Airlines
 Steppenwolf Theatre Company
 The Spice House
 Tony & Tina's Wedding
 Twin Anchors
 Victory Gardens Theater

And special thanks to the supporters of the Winners' Circle annual holiday celebration:


Bacci Pizza & Restaurant * Damenzo's Pizza * Grace House * Joe's Taylor Street Subs * Kedzie House * Original Ferrara, Inc.

Leadership Retreat

Continued from page 2

who have now taken on leadership roles," Carty said. Leadership roles with WC include re-designing the program's code of ethics, designing and marketing WC products, and speaking to TASC juvenile programs. Given the success of the retreat and the enthusiasm it garnered, future events are being considered.

The participants have come up with ideas specifically designed to enhance, empower, and motivate leadership within the Recovery Community via the Restoring Citizenship project. Timothy Bell, a Winners' Circle Leadership Group member, reminded those at the retreat of the life-changing decisions they

are making because of Restoring Citizenship. "The last free bus ride I took where I didn't have to pay the fare I was chained to the seat... I'm following your footprints now (nodding to Alfred Allen, founder of both WC and the WC Leadership Group). I know how to 'de-struct' something - I'm good at that - but this, this is building something. Together we are building something important." 

For more information on Restoring Citizenship or Winners' Circle, contact Jerome Collins at (312) 573-8224 or jcollins@tasc-il.org, or Laurel Parker at (312) 573-8219 or lparker@tasc-il.org.



Facilitator Mark Sanders (standing center) and retreat participants celebrate their accomplishments

Support Shown for Prevention and Treatment Continued from page 1

of persons with addictions changes so that they have very little control over their own actions. When the report was released, Angela M. Bowman, CEO of IADDA explained that the survey proved people understand that addiction is pervasive and treatment is effective. She asserted that, "The discussion now must move toward making treatment and recovery resources more available to those in need, and reducing the stigma experienced by those in treatment and recovery."

Great strides have been made to reach the public with these findings, but stigma against those with alcohol and drug disease does persist, as evidenced by the recent John Stossel 20/20 Special Report on ABC, "Help Me! I Can't Help Myself." The program, which aired in prime time on April 21, ignored the latest scientific evidence by suggesting that addiction is not a disease but a choice. Dr. Jack Henningfield of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and professor of Behavioral Biology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine wrote in response to the television program that it "veered recklessly away

from science and the consensus of the world's leading health organizations, and showed little concern for the truth." He asserted that the program's implications are what perpetuate the belief that abuse and addiction to drugs is "a problem of personal decision making rather than the nation's largest public health problem."

Discounting scientific findings and viewing alcohol and other drug problems as a "problem of personal decision making" have contributed to the lack of adequate funding for research and clinical trials on new medications to treat addiction. For instance, according to Peter Landers of the *Wall Street Journal*, even as scientists are discovering new medications to treat addiction, large pharmaceutical companies are reluctant to enter the market. Landers writes that one reason for this reluctance is that companies do not want to be seen as being associated with addicted persons. The economic benefits for private investment in treatment medications are also unclear, because "a drug company can't send a bill to the largest group that benefits from addiction treatment: nonaddicts." He writes that addiction, like pollution, is an

issue that affects society collectively, but few are willing to pay for the remedies ("Why Treating Addicts is Tough Play for Drug Firms," *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2003).

Since 1967 when the American Medical Association (AMA) first proclaimed alcoholism to be a "complex disease," progress has been made toward informing the public of the latest research and creating policies regarding alcohol and other drug use that better serve the whole community. Public support continues to grow for equality in health care, employment, and public benefits for individuals in need of treatment and recovery services and public officials are heeding their voices. As the Join Together national policy panel writes, "If we stop discriminating and help people reclaim their lives, we will all be better off." **TR**

For more information regarding the IADDA survey, visit www.iadda.org. For the complete report, "Ending Discrimination Against People with Alcohol and Drug Problems," visit www.jointogether.org.

U *Upcoming Conferences*

Illinois Alcoholism & Drug Dependence Association (IADDA) Annual Conference

Oak Brook, IL - September 21-24, 2003

www.iadda.org

10th National TASC Conference on Drugs and Crime

Raleigh, NC - October 19-22, 2003

www.nationaltasc.org

D *Did You Know...*

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

www.health.org/recoverymonth/2003

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Save the Date!

Please join us as we present
Congressman Danny K. Davis
with the
2003 TASC Leadership Award

Monday, June 30, 2003

Reception: 11:30 a.m.

Luncheon & Program: 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

Hotel Inter-Continental
Grand Ballroom
505 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Luncheon tickets are \$125 each. Raffle tickets are \$5 each.

For more information or to become a Benefactor or Sponsor, call (312) 573-8210.

