

# TASC Reports

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## Treatment-on-Demand Initiative Introduced

In a move that could position Illinois as a national leader in treatment policy and practice, Illinois Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-Chicago) and over 100 representatives of the addiction, treatment, and recovery community are mobilizing efforts to place an advisory referendum on the November 2004 ballot. If successful, this referendum will formally request Illinois lawmakers to provide accessible substance abuse treatment-on-demand for anyone in Illinois who requests it.

### The Initiative

The proposed referendum will put the following question to voters:

*“Shall the Illinois State Government provide adequate funding for comprehensive and appropriate substance abuse treatment for any Illinois state resident requesting services from a licensed provider, community-based organization, or medical care facility within the state?”*

Leading the petition drive to put the question to Illinois voters is a coalition called C.A.T.C.H. (Citizens Activated to Change Healthcare), comprised of committed citizens, community leaders, and experts in the fields of addiction and recovery, healthcare, and research. The treatment-on-demand initiative that they are advocating represents one of the most expansive treatment and recovery platforms that Illinois has seen in many years. If enacted, this initiative could revolutionize the speed, quality, and availability of treatment for Illinois residents.

Bringing an advisory referendum to the November ballot requires the signatures of over 300,000 registered Illinois voters collected and tallied by the end of April 2004. C.A.T.C.H. and other supporters will be working in the upcoming months to communicate the importance of this initiative to registered voters statewide.

### Why Treatment-on-Demand

The treatment-on-demand referendum is intended to show Illinois policymakers that taxpayers want adequate funding for comprehensive and appropriate substance abuse treatment. “We want to give the people of Illinois an unmistakable voice about the level of compassion and funding commitment our state should show towards those seeking substance abuse treatment,” said Congressman Davis.

Statistics from the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse suggest that such a commitment could affect significant numbers of Illinois residents. Close to 900,000 Illinois adults and 90,000 youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are considered candidates for treatment services.<sup>1</sup>

According to an independent survey of likely voters sponsored by the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA) in September 2002, the people of Illinois identify addiction as a pervasive illness best handled by prevention and treatment. (See the box on page 3 for more results.)

### Support the 2004 Treatment-on-Demand Referendum

- Call the office of Congressman Davis at 773-533-7520 to find out how you can become involved in gathering signatures.
- Visit [www.recoveryinillinois.org](http://www.recoveryinillinois.org) for more information on the referendum, facts about drug use in Illinois and to download signature petition forms and instructions.

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**TASC Honors Congressman Danny K. Davis at 2003 Leadership Award Luncheon**



From left: Pat Green, TASC Recovery Coach; Melody Heaps, TASC President; Congressman Danny K. Davis, Leadership Award Recipient; Lorraine Russ and Timothy Bell, TASC Client Honorees; and Jerome Collins, TASC Restoring Citizenship Project Specialist

**Special thanks to the following sponsors and benefactors for their generous support in the 2003 Leadership Award campaign:**

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# Treatment-on-Demand Initiative Introduced

## Why Public Attitudes Support Treatment

Some of the public awareness and support reflected in the IADDA survey can be attributed to an increased understanding of the nature of addiction. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has extensively researched the scientific basis of the neurological effects of drugs. Using brain-imaging techniques, scientists have discovered that neurological changes occur as drugs of abuse exert psychoactive effects. These brain and behavioral changes persist long after the individual has stopped using drugs, resulting in a recovery process that may last throughout the life of the individual. Studies confirm that addiction is as preventable and treatable as other chronic conditions. In fact, adherence with treatment plans is greater and relapse rates lower for alcohol, opioid, and cocaine management than for hypertension and asthma.<sup>2</sup>

Economic circumstances have also contributed to changes in thinking. While the relationships are complex, evidence shows that untreated abuse and addiction add noticeable costs to communities, healthcare, and government systems. In its June 25, 2003, "InfoFacts – Costs to Society," NIDA surmised that over half of the estimated costs of drug abuse were associated with drug-related crime. This includes lost productivity of victims and incarcerated perpetrators, incarceration costs, federal drug traffic control, and property damage. Most of the remaining costs result from premature death, lost productivity due to drug-related illness, and healthcare expenditures.

Policy leaders already consider treatment and recovery programs as a way to save money for the state. Cost effective substance abuse treatment ranges from \$3,100 to \$12,500 per person per year, compared to the nearly \$24,000 spent for


incarceration in Illinois.<sup>3</sup> Recovery also keeps ex-offenders from returning to prison. In a combined sample of 1,461 inmates from California, Texas, and Delaware, only 25% of those given intensive treatment and aftercare through a therapeutic community returned to prison after three years, compared with 75% recidivism for those receiving either no treatment or treatment in prison without post-release aftercare.<sup>4</sup>

## Current Challenges

Recent changes in public sentiment and policy only begin to address the impact of the costs and challenges related to addiction. National data shows that four out of five people who need addictions treatment do not receive it.<sup>5</sup> Communities across Illinois continue to cope with the influence of drugs and drug-related crime. According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, drug sentences outside of Cook County doubled between 1993 and 2003. Demand for treatment continues to exceed capacity. Too often, the road to recovery can be blocked by long waits and a lack of resources. Ex-offenders who are fortunate enough to receive treatment in corrections facilities frequently return to

## Continued from page 1

communities with little or no resources to help continue their recovery. While personal awareness and attitudes related to substance abuse and addiction are changing, individuals, healthcare providers, and local governments still struggle with tight budgets and limited means.

A treatment-on-demand referendum, voted in by the citizens of the state, could elevate dialogue, funding, and policy regarding accessible and affordable treatment. Illinois could be poised to create one of the most innovative and comprehensive approaches to substance abuse and addiction in the nation. 

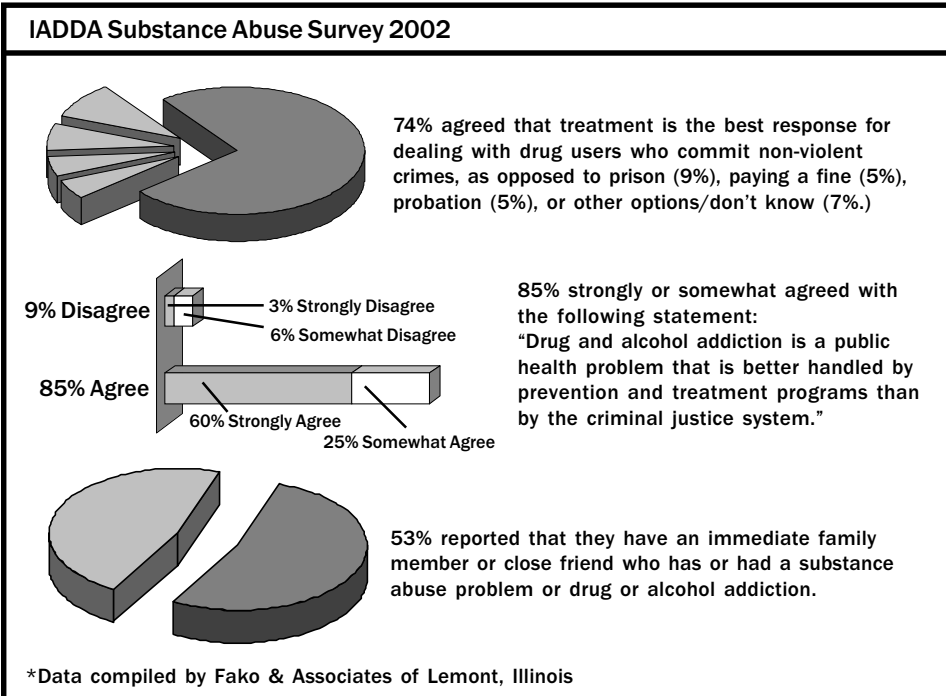
<sup>1</sup> Illinois Department of Human Services, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Office of Prevention, "A Substance Abuse Plan, Second Year Update. Strengthening Our System of Care: Voices and Faces of Success." September 2001.

<sup>2</sup> O'Brien, C.P., & McLellan, A.T. "Myths about the Treatment of Addiction." 1996. The Lancet, 347, 237-240.

<sup>3</sup> Scanlon, Anna. "State Spending on Substance Abuse Treatment," National Conference of State Legislatures, Dec 2002, and Illinois Department of Corrections, FY02 Report.

<sup>4</sup> "Treating Prisoners for Drug Abuse Reduces Recidivism Rates." March 3, 2000. Psychiatric News (as cited in September and December 1999 Prison Journal.)

<sup>5</sup> Scanlon, Anna. "State Spending on Substance Abuse Treatment," National Conference of State Legislatures, Dec 2002.



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(312) 787-0208

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Please forward to Sharon Sheridan  
Communications Manager, (312) 573-8223  
fax (312) 787-9663 or  
e-mail [ssheridan@tasc-il.org](mailto:ssheridan@tasc-il.org)

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

### Save the date:

- Illinois Alcoholism & Drug Dependence Association (IADDA)  
Annual Conference  
September 19-22, 2004, Oak Brook, Illinois  
[www.iadda.org](http://www.iadda.org)
- National TASC  
Annual Conference  
September 26-29, 2004, Arlington, Virginia  
[www.nationaltasc.org](http://www.nationaltasc.org)

### TASC's Winners' Circle hits the small screen!

A film highlighting TASC's Winners' Circle will be appearing on CAN-TV within the next few months. TASC's Recovery Community Support Program commissioned the video to be used as a teaching tool in the community and at national conferences. Because CAN-TV's studios were used in the process of creating the 25-minute film, it is automatically placed into the viewing circulation. Please refer to TASC's website ([www.illinoistasc.org](http://www.illinoistasc.org)) for the dates and times the video will air.