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**‘ACCESS TO RECOVERY’ GRANT COULD BRING MILLIONS IN NEW
SUBSTANCE ABUSE FUNDING TO OKLAHOMA**

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, in partnership with several state Native American tribes, is applying for an innovative federal grant, which, if funded, could provide up to \$45 million in new money to provide substance abuse treatment in Oklahoma.

Approximately 15, three-year “Access to Recovery” grants will be awarded by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in August. The grant is targeted primarily toward pregnant women and women with dependent children, with special emphasis on women of Native American descent, although any person needing substance abuse treatment will be eligible to participate.

The program will use a “voucher” system to allow people in need of substance abuse treatment to choose among providers.

“If funded, this grant will allow those in need of treatment for alcohol and other drugs to access the best services for their particular situation, whether they seek help from a

state, private, traditional Native American, community-based, faith-based or non-secular substance abuse treatment provider,” said Ben Brown, ODMHSAS deputy commissioner for substance abuse services. “Although any person with a substance abuse problem will

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be eligible to participate in this program, we will dedicate a lot of our marketing efforts to bringing Native American and faith-based substance abuse treatment providers into our provider ‘fold,’ so to speak, so every person who needs substance abuse treatment – regardless of gender, religion or culture – can access it.”

Program participants will receive cash vouchers that can be used for a range of services, from direct treatment to transportation and employment counseling.

Brown said he is hopeful Oklahoma will receive this grant.

“Oklahoma has made great strides over the past few years in adding more quality substance abuse treatment programs, even within the confines of budgetary shortfalls,” he said, citing such new programs as the Tulsa Women and Children’s Center, a 52-bed residential facility for pregnant women and women with dependent children, and the Norman Adolescent Center, which maintains approximately 20 residential beds for adolescents who need substance abuse treatment. “This grant would allow us to reach even more Oklahomans with substance abuse problems by adding Native American and faith-based substance abuse treatment providers to our list of providers. Absolutely every person who needs substance abuse treatment, in my opinion, should be able to receive it and also should be able to choose their treatment provider.”

For more information about the program, call Jennifer Glover, ODMHSAS
clinical treatment services coordinator, at (405) 522-2347.

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