



August 30, 2004

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Editor:

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, a time to celebrate the stories of those now free of addiction. Thanks to community-based substance abuse treatment programs, drug courts, support groups, and the encouragement of family and friends, thousands of people find the road to recovery each year.

Treatment for addiction is as successful as treatment for other chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma. Most importantly, treatment helps return the individual to productive functioning in the family, workplace and community.

The benefits of treatment accrue not only to individuals and their friends and families, but to society as well. Research shows that, a year after treatment, drug use was reduced by 50 percent, criminal activity dropped by 80 percent, employment increased, and homelessness and dependence on public assistance decreased. For every dollar spent on treatment, nearly \$7 is saved in reduced crime-related costs, a figure that rises to \$12 when health-care costs are included.

There is hope. Help is available and recovery is possible. In Oklahoma, you can learn more about local substance abuse treatment facilities by calling the "Reachout" hotline at 1-800-522-9054.

During National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, let's take a moment to remember that treatment can be effective and that lives can change because of it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Brown", written in a cursive style.

Ben Brown

Deputy Commissioner for Substance Abuse Services  
Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services