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Aug. 30, 2004

JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY: SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION RECOVERY MONTH

Imagine a nation in which a deadly but treatable disease is taking its toll on more than 5 percent of the population. One that is wreaking havoc with the lives of millions of men, women and children, yet only 10 percent of the people who need treatment receive it.

That's the situation that prevails in the United States today. The disease is alcohol and drug addiction.

This year marks the 15th annual observance of Recovery Month, which celebrates those in recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders and promotes the need for better treatment access.

"Alcohol and drug use disorders have devastating health and societal consequences, and our state is not immune to these problems," said Ben Brown, deputy commissioner for substance abuse services at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. "Recovery Month is an opportunity for us to highlight the benefits of

treatment and encourage people with drug and alcohol problems to begin their journey of recovery."

During Recovery Month each September, communities nationwide join together to help people recognize that alcohol and drug use disorders are treatable diseases, he added.

(more)

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Research shows that treatments for alcohol and drug use disorders are as effective as treatments for other chronic conditions—yet nationally, only 10 percent of Americans who need treatment for alcohol or drug use disorders actually receive it.

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

Every dollar spent on substance abuse treatment yields up to \$7 in reduced crime-related costs, a figure that rises to 12-to-one when health-care costs are included, Brown added. Additionally, workplace productivity increases, interpersonal conflicts are reduced, drug use and crime drop from 40 to 60 percent, and employment prospects increase dramatically.

In Oklahoma, nearly 130,000 adults need treatment for alcoholism and another 21,000 need treatment for other types of drug use.

“Alcohol is still, by far, our number one drug of choice. On average, for every person needing treatment for drug abuse, 7.5 need treatment for alcohol addiction. That statistic ranges from a low of 4.4-to-one in northeast and northwest Oklahoma to 15.4-to-one in southwest Oklahoma.”

The department's "Reachout" hotline can direct family members or those with drug or alcohol problems to appropriate community-based treatment centers or other resources. For more information, call the hotline at **1-800-522-9054**.

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