

NEWS RELEASE



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NCADD-NJ welcomes Institute of Medicine report calling for quality treatment for addiction

TRENTON ... (January 5, 2006) – The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey (NCADD-NJ) embraces the recently released Institute of Medicine (IOM) findings on addictive disorders and mental health, which recognizes that alcoholism and other drug addictions are legitimate diseases and should be treated as such. The IOM report, entitled “Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental and Health Care Conditions” and the first study by the institute on addiction in a decade, emphasizes that as a disease, addictive illnesses should be met with evidence-based standards of care, should be treated by a well-trained professional workforce, and should be integrated into the health care system at all levels. It also calls for a comprehensive strategy that ensures that “Multiple providers’ care of the same patient is coordinated” and that “Purchasers should modify policies and practices that preclude paying for evidence-based screening, treatment and coordination of M/SU (mental health/substance use) care...”

NCADD-NJ Executive Director Wayne Wirta said, “The IOM report’s call for quality care that is grounded in scientific evidence should be a boon to the addiction field as well as to individuals needing care for an alcohol or drug problem. As for our agency, it is gratifying to see the institute affirm the approach taken by our Substance Abuse Initiative (SAI) Program, providing professional assessments and arranging for care that is appropriate to the individual, and coordinating the care provided by addiction treatment providers and other social service agencies involved with the patient. It shows New

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Jersey is at the forefront of addiction medicine.” NCADD-NJ’s SAI Program, a welfare-to-work project undertaken in 1998 in the wake of federal welfare reform, anticipated what the IOM study had to say about the need for quality treatment that is patient-centered. The report presses health care organizations to share clinical information in coordinating a patient’s care, a cornerstone of the SAI model.

The IOM report also recommended patient-centered care, stating that treatment services should “Incorporate informed, patient-centered decision making ... including active patient participation in the design and revision of patient treatment and recovery plans...”and “Adopt recovery-oriented and illness self-management practices that support patient preferences for treatment...peer support, and other elements of the wellness recovery plan.” Wirta noted that NCADD-NJ strongly supports a client-centered approach with active client participation and choice in the ongoing treatment process. “That’s the way we have operated the SAI program and we have begun promoting this philosophy in other ways.” He said that SAI’s methods are found in such recent undertakings as the NCADD-NJ-sponsored “Making Treatment Count” conference and a grant proposal to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct a three-year demonstration project at two state treatment programs using the “Client-Directed, Outcome-Informed Clinical Work” approach developed by renowned addiction researchers Scott D. Miller, Ph.D., and Dr. David Mee-Lee, M.D.

The IOM’s emphasis on addiction as a disease is at the core NCADD’s mission, which as outlined by its founder Marty Mann is to overcome the stigma that has prevented generations of people with an alcohol or drug problem from accessing appropriate care. Dr. David Lewis, chairman of the NCADD National’s board of directors, said, “We commend the IOM in calling for reforms in alcoholism and other drug dependence treatment. The fact that almost 40 years following the American Medical Association’s recognition of alcoholism as a disease we still need to be concerned about clinical

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standards of practice points to the continuing stigma associated with addictive illness.”

NCADD’s Medical and Science Committee reviewed the IOM study and praised its unbiased conclusions and scientific approach. The committee’s chairman, Dr. Robert Niven, said, “This report provides valid, reliable information we believe will help to educate the medical community about addiction and provide the framework of an effective health care delivery system.”

NCADD-NJ has dedicated itself for more than 20 years to educating New Jersey’s citizens about alcohol and drug use issues, to advocating on state policies concerning individuals addicted to alcohol or other drugs, and to reducing the stigma that frustrates a public health approach to the disease of addiction. More information about the council is available at its website, www.ncaddnj.org.