

NEWS RELEASE



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Poll shows New Jersey with broad bi-partisan support of including addiction treatment in health reform

TRENTON ... (September 23, 2009) – The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey (NCADD-NJ) today released the results of a local poll that shows broad support for increasing access to alcohol and drug addiction treatment. Seventy-seven percent of New Jersey residents support including addiction treatment in health care reform, and 66 percent said they are willing to pay more each month in health care premiums to make treatment more affordable and accessible. NCADD-NJ, which last year received a grant from the Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG) initiative, has long been committed to expanding addiction treatment services for New Jersey’s citizens and has conducted its own polling on issues related to treatment access.

“New Jersey residents recognize the severity of addiction, as most understand that it can be a life or death health issue,” said John Hulick, NCADD-NJ director of Public Affairs and director of CATG-NJ. “We must do more to close the treatment gap here in the state. It follows that so many here support treatment for addiction, as most in the state (78 percent) understand that addiction is a disease.”

A parallel national poll also conducted by CATG found that more than three-quarters of Americans (77 percent) support including addiction treatment in health reform, 56 percent strongly.

In New Jersey, support for including addiction treatment in health care reform unites people across party lines. Seventy-one percent of Republicans, 83 percent of Democrats and 78 of Independents support including addiction treatment in health care reform.

Seventy-seven of those polled in the state say treatment is effective in helping people get better (including 77 percent of Democrats, 79 percent of Independents and 81 percent of Republicans). These numbers are in keeping with what was found nationally, with eight in ten Americans saying that treatment is effective in helping addicted individuals recover.

Other key information from the poll included the following:

- 65 percent of people in New Jersey have suffered from or know someone who has suffered from alcohol or drug addictions (2 percent themselves, 22 percent someone in their family, 18 percent close friend, and 23 percent someone else).
- 82 percent of people think alcohol and drug addiction is a serious or moderate problem in New Jersey.

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- 72 percent of people believe that addiction should be treated as a chronic health condition, just like diabetes or other diseases.

Conducted by Lake Research Partners from August 6- August 12, 2009, the phone survey interviewed 400 adults 18 and older in New Jersey, and has a margin of error + 5 percent.

Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG) is a national program of the Open Society Institute. This initiative is designed to create an awareness of—and increase resources to close—an alarming treatment gap: currently, four out of five Americans who need drug and alcohol addiction treatment are unable to get it. The initiative aims to mobilize public support for expanded treatment by increasing public funding, broadening insurance coverage, and achieving greater program efficiency.

NCADD-NJ is a non-profit organization that for more than a quarter century has dedicated itself to educating New Jersey's citizens and law-makers 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.

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