

NEWS RELEASE

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STATE'S MODEL ADDICTIONS PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROFILED IN CASE STUDY

TRENTON ... (March 20, 2003) -- New Jersey's unmatched program to meet the addiction treatment needs of deaf, hard of hearing and disabled individuals is the subject of a recently released case study that was presented at the Statehouse today by John deMiranda, executive director of the National Association on Alcohol, Drugs and Disability. The study, which was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is entitled "New Jersey Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Disabled: From Advocacy to Access."

In his forward to the study, de Miranda describes New Jersey's response to this special needs population as among "the most exciting and powerful stories" in the field. He said the story the study details "stands as a challenge to other states to take substantive action to meet the treatment needs of citizens with disabilities."

The case study reviews the history of the program, from its beginnings at the grassroots level, to unsatisfactory legislative initiatives, and, ultimately, to the establishment of a \$350,000 set-aside, appropriated from Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction funds, thus ensuring proper treatment for people with these disabilities. The study credits advocates' determination and inspiration along with their grasp of the legislative process for producing New Jersey's unique solution.

Establishing a set-aside was not the only unusual aspect of the program and how it came to be: various advocacy groups, service providers and consumers, which sometimes have competing interests, joined forces to advance the cause. Often cast together under the catch-all "people with disabilities," these individuals

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in fact have very different needs.

The case study does not conclude with the program's inception but documents how it changed the lives of some of the population it targets. The study also examines how the legislation and the resulting services have changed New Jersey's alcohol and drug prevention and treatment service system and considers what needs remain.

Among the important contributors to the program's becoming a reality were Terrence O'Conner, who was the assistant commissioner of the Division of Addiction Services at the time, and John Hulick, the director of Public Affairs and Policy at the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey. It was O'Conner who urged that the advocates pursue a set-aside dedicated to a specific discrete population rather than attempt to modify existing services, while Hulick's expertise was critical to shepherding the measure through the Legislature.

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