

## Sample Press Release

### For Immediate Release

**Contact:** (Name of person within your organization who is available to answer questions from the press. Add contact's phone number.)

#### **(Name of your organization) Recognizes *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month* and Calls for Increased Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services**

(City and state where your organization is located; date you want press release published) (Name and title of your organization) recognized September as ***National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)*** and called for more treatment services and better coordination of existing services. It urged the community to support efforts to make substance abuse treatment available to all those in need. Nationally, it is estimated that 76 percent of those in need of treatment for a problem with illicit drugs did not seek or receive treatment. Among those most in need of effective, coordinated services are men, women, and youth who are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol and may also have a co-occurring mental disorder or co-existing physical illness. Millions of people are in need of treatment for both substance abuse and mental disorders, but too often they are undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, or slip through the cracks entirely, such as those in our nation's homeless population. Half of the people living in our streets have co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders.

Not only do people with co-occurring substance abuse and mental disorders need to be diagnosed, but both disorders must be treated because failure to do so almost assures an exacerbation of health problems. As the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's ***Report to Congress on the Prevention and Treatment of Co-occurring Substance Abuse Disorders and Mental Disorders*** points out: "If one of the co-occurring disorders goes untreated, both usually get worse and additional complications often arise. The combination of disorders can result in poor response to traditional treatments, and increases the risk for other serious medical problems (e.g., HIV, hepatitis B and C, and cardiac and pulmonary diseases)."

"Drug and alcohol abuse and addiction have devastating health and societal consequences. Substance abuse is the root cause of a myriad of health problems—it causes tens of thousands of deaths each year, and untreated addiction takes an enormous economic toll—an estimated \$294 billion annually," said (name of spokesperson, title, and organization). "But it can be successfully treated. For this reason, the ***Recovery Month*** 2003 theme, ***'Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Health,'*** is especially appropriate. ***Recovery Month*** is the right time to highlight the benefits of substance abuse treatment and encourage individuals with drug and alcohol problems to begin their journey of recovery," (name of spokesperson).

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During September, communities nationwide join together to help people recognize that substance abuse or addiction to drugs and alcohol is a treatable disease, and that treatment is as effective as it is for other chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. However, in the case of co-occurring mental disorders or co-existing physical illnesses, it is important that the substance abuse and mental and physical conditions be treated simultaneously in a coordinated manner. During **Recovery Month**, special efforts will be made by the (your organization) to reach out to the health care provider and payer community to encourage their support for effective, available treatment for all those in need.

**Recovery Month** also celebrates the successes of individuals who are in recovery and acknowledges men and women in the treatment field who dedicate their lives to helping those with addictions.

Locally, several public awareness activities will take place throughout the month of September: (Give examples such as those listed below.)

- A Community Forum will take place on (date/time). At the Forum, many drug/alcohol and treatment-related topics will be discussed, and solutions to associated problems will be presented and addressed.
- Information addressing the effectiveness of treatment and instructing individuals how to get involved in ensuring those in need have access in their community will be distributed to educators, faith leaders, local employers, and others in the community.
- Fund-raising events will be held to raise money to support existing substance abuse treatment programs and services, or to create new ones.

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