

## **Educational Projects for State Leaders Bring Science to Policy Making in Addiction**

### ***NIDA and SAMHSA Fund Projects to Help States Mount Cost-Effective Solutions to Problems of Drug and Alcohol Dependence***

Bringing empirical support to substance abuse policy continues for TRI in calendar year 2007 under two federally-funded educational projects for State leaders.

The NIDA-funded *Addiction Studies Program* is inviting teams of senior State officials from Executive and Legislative branches to workshops where nationally recognized experts discuss the science of addiction and the ways that effective, science-based prevention and treatment approaches can be mounted at the State level. This successful project was co-founded in 1999 by the Wake Forest University School of Medicine and the National Families in Action, originally as an educational series for journalists. In 2005, a separate series for legislators was added when TRI and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) became project partners. Acknowledging that issues of addiction are challenging and cross-cutting at the State level, beginning in 2007 the series will pair legislators with their Executive branch counterparts in workshops appropriate for State policy makers in fiscal, substance abuse treatment and prevention, health, criminal justice, child welfare, and other sectors.

The second project, the SAMHSA-funded “*Educating State Legislators on the Outcomes of Addiction Treatment and Approaches to Measuring Performance,*” enters its third year of bringing scientists to State capitols to discuss ways the quality of addiction treatment can be improved through performance measurement. The many topics covered at these locally-designed briefings for legislators include monitoring outcomes of expenditures, tracking return on investment and re-directing savings through cost-offset studies, developing performance-based contracting systems, improving purchasing, and a variety of other measurement initiatives. Funded under Partners for Recovery through Abt Associates, the project is lead by the State Associations of Addictions Services with TRI and NCSL.

Bonnie Catone, TRI’s Communications Director, noted the projects’ goals are to further extend the explosion of scientific knowledge that has been influencing policy and practice around substance abuse for the past decade. “In many ways, States are on the firing line,” Catone said. “Budget pressures and the need to effectively confront addiction to alcohol and other drugs as a public policy imperative make it critical that funded programs be effective – that dollars be placed where they will do the most good. Both these programs recognize and respond to these realities,” she said.

More information about the projects can be obtained from their websites at [www.addictionstudies.org](http://www.addictionstudies.org) (for the Addiction Studies Program) and <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/satmeasure.htm> (for the performance measurement project,) or by contacting Catone directly at [BCatone@tresearch.org](mailto:BCatone@tresearch.org).