

Frequently Asked Questions

What does ONDCP do? The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy was created in 1988 to help the President and Vice President develop strategies to curtail supplies of illicit drugs from domestic or international sources (“supply reduction”); and treatment/prevention strategies addressing use and abuse of drugs and tobacco (“demand reduction”). To coordinate the work of the number of federal agencies with jurisdiction over these issues, each year ONDCP issues a national “drug control strategy,” coordinates government-wide activities, and ensures that a portion of each agency’s budget is allocated accordingly.

What will the ONDCP Deputy Director do? McLellan will concentrate on “demand reduction” strategies, collaborating with other federal agencies to create a coherent and coordinated federal approach to reducing the nation’s drug problems.

Why Dr. McLellan? A. Thomas McLellan, Ph.D. is one of the foremost experts in the nation on drug and alcohol policy. A critic of over-reliance on incarceration and of acute care treatment approaches, McLellan is a proponent of cross-agency collaborative strategies, treatment and prevention policies supported by evidence; engaging doctors and other medical professionals, helping parents keep youth safe from drugs and alcohol, and strengthening the treatment delivery system across the nation. He is by training and profession a psychologist and behavioral researcher, consistent with the Obama/Biden Administration’s proclivity toward science and policies that “work.”

What is the Treatment Research Institute (TRI)? TRI is an independent, non-profit research and development organization co-founded in 1992 by Dr. McLellan, Jack Durell, M.D. and others from the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Studies of Addiction. Dedicated to science-driven transformation of addiction policy and treatment, TRI conducts original research and adapts scientific findings into products and services helping treatment providers, policy makers and parents.

Since its founding, TRI has produced some of the most respected addiction research in the nation (*see below*). Members of Congress, federal agencies, and state and local policy makers frequently call on TRI investigators for expert guidance. Some TRI researchers were featured in the critically acclaimed HBO documentary *Addictions*, on-screen or as authors of supplemental written material, and other national broadcasts such as *Night Line*. They and others have frequently testified before Congress and/or state legislatures or been consulted by print, broadcast or on-line media.

What are some of TRI’s major contributions ? In the seventeen years of its existence, TRI has been in the forefront of many of the most important advances in the addiction field:

Addiction as a Chronically Relapsing Disease: In 2000 A. Thomas McLellan and others noted the similarities between addiction and other chronically relapsing medical conditions such as asthma, Type II diabetes and hypertension. A controversial proposition at the time, today most experts talk about addiction as a chronically relapsing brain disease that cannot be cured but can be managed.

Substance Abuse and Crime : TRI is one of the most active research centers in the nation on problem court models, investigating when alternatives to incarceration can work and when they can’t, and for what types of offenders, and is one of the few groups translating research findings into policy solutions and science-based products.

Substance Use, Adolescents and Parents: In 2005 TRI entered into a collaboration with the Partnership for a Drug Free America to develop science-based tools for parents trying to prevent drug/alcohol use in their kids or intervene effectively when they know or suspect their children are

using. The resulting “Parents Resource Center,” an on-line resource at www.drugfree.org, is home to two free, science-based, multi-media resources for parents: “A Parents Guide to the Teen Brain” and “Act Now.”

Addiction in Primary Health Care : In a field where 90% of patients known to need treatment don’t receive it, and countless others are loathe to seek treatment out of shame or stigma, addiction professionals have long sought to broaden detection/intervention opportunities by engaging doctors and other medical specialists. The field got a big boost in December 2008 with release of the final report of “PRISM” (Program to Integrate Substance Use Issues into Mainstream Healthcare), a project launched in 2002 by TRI and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and joined in 2006 by four of the most prestigious medical societies in the nation. The report was replete with evidence of drug and alcohol impacts on chronic medical conditions commonly treated in doctors’ offices, trauma rooms and other primary care sites.

The “Business” of Addiction Treatment: In 2006, in a bid to rescue the nation’s struggling substance abuse treatment system, TRI joined The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania to investigate lessons learned from other once-plagued industries. The resulting Center on the Organization and Management of Addiction Treatment has organized conferences, consulted with state substance abuse directors and other leaders in the addiction field, and convened thought leaders to develop strategies to translate good business practices into addiction treatment.

Policy Making and Addiction: With more than 70% of substance abuse treatment funded by the public sector, governments can promote high-quality treatment, even during a punishing economic recession, through smart policies, procedures and regulations. Since 2006, TRI has worked with state and local governments to implant purchasing practices and other policies to foster performance-based contracting; broader treatment continuums linking specialty addiction care with criminal justice, child welfare, health and other agencies; and medically-based screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment initiatives.

Who are the Senior Scientists at TRI?

TRI employs more than 60 senior scientists and other researchers, consultants, senior staff, and support personnel, organized into seven sections and centers where original research and translational activities are conducted. Senior staff and consultants include:

- **Constance Pechura, Ph.D.** has been TRI Executive Director since 2007. She spent eight years as Senior Program Officer and Team Leader for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and ten years as Senior Program Officer and Director of the Board on Neuroscience and Behavioral Health for the Institute of Medicine, National Academies of Science. Called by McLellan “someone with a holistic understanding of addiction crossing into the health, mental health, criminal justice, and other ‘silos’ of conventional policy,” Pechura will assume leadership of TRI if McLellan is confirmed.
- **Deni Carise, Ph.D.** is the Director of Treatment Systems Research. She developed the first electronic “early warning” system alerting policy makers to drug use trends across the country, and been in the forefront of efforts to improve treatment through technology. Her international work has helped numerous nations develop modern substance abuse treatment systems.
- **Kimberly Kirby, Ph.D.** is Director of Behavioral Interventions, a specialist on interventions for family members and significant others and a leading researcher on contingency management, community reinforcement, and other behavioral approaches to substance abuse treatment. Her research explores ways to increase use of behavioral interventions in community-based treatment.
- **David Festinger, Ph.D.** is Director of the Section on Law & Ethics and one of several TRI experts on substance abusing offenders. Dr. Festinger is conducting original research, leads TRI’s translational effort in the criminal justice arena, and manages a growing TRI portfolio of research into alternatives to

incarceration.

- **Mady Chalk, Ph.D.** came to TRI in 2006 from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Director of the Section on Policy Research and Analysis, Chalk works with state and local officials to revise purchasing and other policies to accelerate quality improvement in treatment.
- **John Cacciola, Ph.D.** is Director of the Center on the Continuum of Care: Monitoring and Adapting Addiction Treatment. An original contributor to both the ASI and TSR, Cacciola concentrates on continuous monitoring/care approaches consistent with the chronic disease model of addiction.
- **Douglas Marlowe, J.D., Ph.D.** doubles as Senior TRI Scientist and Chief of Science and Policy at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. He is one of the leading researchers in the nation on legal and judicial interventions for substance abusing offenders, particularly drug courts.
- **Amelia Arria, Ph.D.** is a TRI Senior Scientist and expert on adolescent and young adult substance abuse issues. She is also Associate Director of the University of Maryland Center for Substance Abuse Research. With Dr. Winters (*below*) Dr. Arria manages TRI translational development of science-based tools for parents and works with the Betty Ford Institute researching interventions for adolescents and their families.
- **Ken C. Winters, Ph.D. (consultant)** is an expert on assessment and treatment of adolescent substance abuse and gambling issues, serving as TRI Senior Scientist and Director of the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at the University of Minnesota's Department of Psychiatry. Work with the Partnership for a Drug Free America on parent tools is directed by Dr. Winters, along with individual research projects involving adolescents.
- **James McKay, Ph.D. (consultant)** is one of the nation's foremost experts on aftercare and adaptive treatment models for alcohol and drug use disorders. Dr. McKay is Scientific Director of the Penn-VA Center for the Studies of Addiction and Principal Investigator on the Penn Center on Adaptive Treatment for Alcoholism.
- **Steven Belenko, Ph.D. (consultant)** is a Senior TRI Scientist and Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice, Temple University. He is an expert on substance abuse and crime, the impact of drugs on the adult and juvenile justice systems, and the integration of treatment and other services in criminal justice settings.
- **Jack Kemp**, Senior Policy Associate, is former Director of Substance Abuse Treatment for the State of Delaware and currently working with TRI and state officials on performance-based contracting and other purchasing and policy changes.

The Treatment Research Institute is a non-profit research and development organization specializing in science-driven reform of practice and policy in addiction and substance use. For more information contact Bonnie Catone, Director of Communications, at bcatone@tresearch.org or visit the TRI website at www.tresearch.org.