

Fostering Science-Driven Policy Making in Addiction: Four State Teams Complete Special Addiction Studies Program

September 2009, NIDA Funded Workshop Orients toward Cost Issues in Addiction Field

October 2009; Philadelphia: Four teams of high-level executive and legislative branch decision makers from Arizona, Iowa, Kentucky and Oregon have completed a specially designed Addiction Studies Program (ASP) focusing on ways states can leverage limited public funds for addiction programming - even in a nationwide recession.

The annual ASP workshop, held September in Seattle, featured experts discussing the cost implications of unrecognized and/or untreated drug/alcohol problems, along with ways to measure offsets to other agency budgets for expended treatment dollars. Ideas for reducing criminal justice expenses by addressing addiction, ways to leverage Medicaid spending, and successful prevention strategies were also discussed.

. ASP is a NIDA funded educational series bringing cutting-edge, policy relevant research findings to help states develop effective drug and alcohol programs. The program is co-directed by the Wake Forest School of Medicine (Wake Forest) and National Families in Action (NFIA), with the National Conference of State Legislatures and Treatment Research Institute. Some traditional segments were retained for the special workshop, such as presentations on addiction as a brain disease (David Friedman, Ph.D., Wake Forest) and the history and societal implications of addiction (Sue Rusche, NFIA). For most of the remainder of the 2.5 days, however, financing issues predominated in recognition of the serious budget shortfalls forcing many states to cut social services spending, addiction programming included.

All four states sent high-level policy makers, executive and legislative, and developed a six-month plan of action at the workshop. Team members received on-the-ground facilitation to help them develop their plans; telephone-based facilitation will continue over the next six months to help team members during the first phase of plan implementation.

Funding permitting, announcement of the 2010 workshop will be issued early next year. For more information, visit the project web site at www.addictionstudies.org.

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.