

Alcohol Abuse Has Devastating Effects

Treatment Can Make a Difference in Health and Finances

Across the nation, more than 18 million individuals suffer from alcohol-use disorders and millions more are affected by loved ones' abuse of alcohol, according to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., which sponsors Alcohol Awareness Month. Alcohol abuse also has a tremendous toll on the nation overall, accounting for \$223.5 billion (\$746 per person) in costs resulting from loss in workplace productivity, related healthcare expenses, law enforcement and other criminal justice expenses, and motor vehicle accidents resulting from impaired driving, as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“These statistics and evidence of the effectiveness of treatment for alcoholism make a compelling case for ensuring access to prevention and treatment services, and recovery support programs,” said Debra L. Wentz, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies.



NJAMHAA represents 170 providers of addiction prevention and treatment services, mental health care and a range of non-clinical services, including peer services, supportive housing and supported employment, throughout the state. “This illustration also applies to other substance use disorders and mental illnesses, which are equally treatable and commonly occur simultaneously with alcoholism.”

“Success stories from NJAMHAA members, including peers, are the ultimate illustrations of how treatment and support services empower individuals with addictions to transform their lives,” Dr. Wentz said. Following are a few of the many examples from NJAMHAA member providers:

- At 15 years old, Christina entered Daytop’s Outreach Program in Morris Plains to overcome addiction to alcohol and other drugs. Today, at age 22, she is sharing her experiences and inspiration, as well as continuing to be inspired, by speaking with current clients at Daytop. She is also in college and involved in other community activities.
- After 24 years of heavy drinking and other drug use, Sam was arrested for dealing cocaine and was sent to Turning Point. The treatment he received here not only enabled him to get and stay clean, but also to get obtain a nursing license, serve as a sponsor for current clients and engage in many other positive endeavors.

- Jeff's addictions ultimately brought him to the Atlantic City Rescue Mission, where he was connected to Career Opportunity Development, Inc. CODI provides a variety of employment preparation and support services, in addition to running weekly support groups for individuals who have both addictions and mental illnesses. Jeff is now employed and has a home and, after abstaining from alcohol and other drugs for 14 months, he was reunited with his daughter.

“If every individual who suffers from addiction, mental illness or co-occurring disorders gain opportunities to recover, the state and nation will also benefit with the chance for economic recovery. Prevention, treatment and support services go a long way in helping to avoid the exorbitant costs of homelessness, crime and incarceration, as well as hospitalization and emergency room services, which cost significantly more than community-based services,” Dr. Wentz said.