

Behavioral Healthcare Treatment Enables Recovery and Other Successes - September is Recovery Month

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Still, amazing stories emerge of people who are in recovery and the people and organizations that supported them, as they reclaimed their lives or averted negative consequences entirely because they were able to address their health issue. One of many powerful examples is John Stefano, a successful New Jersey businessman who currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Turning Point drug rehabilitation center and is a recognized family man who is committed to helping those in need in his community. John's is a story of hope because he is in recovery. Since John was able to access treatment at Turning Point, the same facility where he now contributes in a leadership role, John was able to address his health issue. This means that John is now able to live life in recovery, free from the pains of substance use. John's story is one that also contrasts the benefits for society when members of our community with these afflictions are able to access the needed care and services versus when that care is not available.

“When treated at community-based behavioral healthcare providers, the profound changes which John Stefano and countless others in recovery were able to make in their lives is nothing short of inspirational” said Randy Thompson, Director of Public Affairs at NJAMHAA. “These changes are not just felt by the individuals but also by the state which saves enormous amounts of funding as each person moves away from a life of dependence or disability and more towards one of independence and productivity.”

By contrast, untreated mental illnesses and substance use disorders have a staggering cost to the state, reaching well above \$5 billion in New Jersey annually. When these fully treatable illnesses go unaddressed, they result in increased use of emergency rooms and hospital beds, as well as increased rates of incarceration, homelessness and disability. It is known that investing in substance use treatment returns \$12 for every \$1 spent and for mental health treatment, \$3 is saved for every \$1 investment. Addressing the enormous unmet need for these services is a core goal for the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA), which represents Turning Point and nearly 170 other mental healthcare and addiction treatment provider organizations throughout the state.

NJAMHAA's provider agencies ensure that as many of New Jersey's residents as possible can access the wide range of mental health and substance use services that the agencies provide.

NJAMHAA's members offer opportunities for adults and children across the state to emulate John's story of hope and recovery, regardless of the type of mental illness or addiction, or presence of co-occurring disorders.

"NJAMHAA and its provider organizations encourage everyone to help promote Recovery Month and the benefits of mental health care and substance use treatment throughout the state when members of our community are able to access treatment and recover," Thompson said. "NJAMHAA encourages everyone – whether they are in recovery, are a family member or friend of someone recovering or a professional in the field – to share stories of recovery to spread the message of hope that recovery is possible."

For more information about Recovery Month, visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's webpage at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>.