



Addictions, Corrections and Legislative Advocacy

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Coalition**

Mental Health America of Indiana

Substance Abuse - #1 Health Problem in America!

- There are more deaths, illnesses and disabilities from substance abuse than from any other preventable health condition.
- Alcohol use is the third leading cause of preventable death, after tobacco use, and poor nutrition/exercise

A public health crisis

- One in four Americans has a family member who is struggling with addiction.
- Over 80% of people with substance abuse or dependence disorder started using before age 18.
- Currently, addiction affects more than 23 million Americans.
- Less than 10% are getting treatment

Common Myths About Drug Abuse...

- Alcohol is not a drug
- Addiction is a moral weakness
- You have to hit rock bottom to recover
- You have to want treatment for it to be successful
- Drug abuse is more common among minorities

What is addiction?

- Addiction is a brain disorder not unlike depression or other mental illnesses
- Addiction is a chronic (long term) illness not unlike diabetes or hypertension
- Addiction is treatable on a level comparable to asthma and diabetes

What is Addiction?

- A brain disease expressed as a compulsive behavior
- The continued abuse of drugs despite negative consequences
- A chronic, potentially relapsing disorder

Untreated Addiction Costs Money

- Alcoholism alone is responsible for 500 million lost workdays each year
- 75% of people with alcohol/drug problem are employed
- 2010 study estimated the cost of substance abuse in Indiana to be \$7.3 Billion per year

The Struggle for Addictions Advocacy

- Substance abuse disorders, including addiction
 - have been one of the most prejudiced of illnesses.
 - are typically seen as a spiritual failing, or a legal or social problem.
 - are rarely viewed as treatable brain disorders, as advances in science and technology now indicate.

We believe...

- Recovering individuals are productive members of society
- Recovery is an ongoing process
- Relapse is not an indication of failure



IAIC puts a face and voice on recovery to break down misperceptions that will change attitudes (stigma) and policies (discrimination)

Our Goals

- **End discrimination** for recovering people through education (*health insurance, housing, employment, public assistance*).
- **Organize and educate** the recovering community on how to advocate without violating traditions
- **Broaden social understanding to** achieve a just response to addiction as a **public health crisis**.

Broad based advocacy

- We provide a unified voice to improve the lives of those affected by addictive disorders.
- **Our mission is to promote recovery** through advocacy, public education and service.
- We accomplish this by educating and influencing organizations, communities and individuals – because ***recovery is a reality!***

What is Advocacy

- Latin for “voice”
- The process of influencing the public’s attitude toward a specific issue or group
- Remember: People make decisions, not institutions.

Advocacy Isn't Just Another Word For Lobbying

- Advocacy- policy and policy change
- Lobbying – endorse or oppose a candidate and/or party

Advocacy = Educate

Advocacy is Like Baseball

- Legislative change happens SLOWLY
- Most of the time when a batter steps up to the plate nothing happens
- Very successful baseball players hit around .300

Faces and Voices of Recovery est. 2001

- Organizing and mobilizing the millions of Americans in long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, our families, friends, and allies, to speak with one voice.
- Changing public perceptions of recovery
- Promoting effective public policy in Washington, D.C. and in all 50 states
- Keeping a focus on the fact that recovery works and is making life better for over 20 million Americans.

<http://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org>

Grounded in Research

- **Faces & Voices' recovery messaging is based on research**
 - **Survey of the Recovery Community**
 - **Survey of the General Public**
 - **Focus groups of the recovery community & the general public (8 groups in 4 cities)**
 - *Conducted by Peter D. Hart & Associates & Robert M. Teeter's Coldwater Corporation*

Faces and Voices of Recovery Survey

— Recovery Community

- 88% believe it is very important for the American public to see that thousands get well every year

— General Public

- A majority of Americans (63%) have been affected by addiction
- A majority (67%) believe that there is a stigma toward people in recovery
- A majority (74%) say that attitudes & policies must change

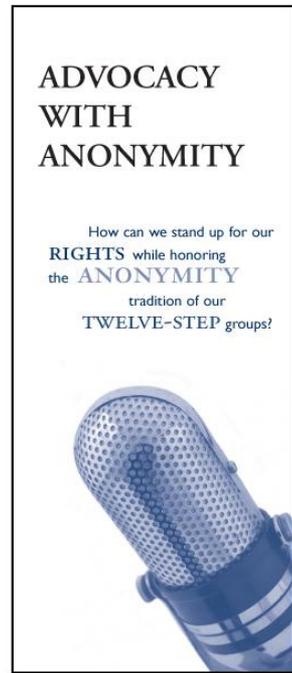
Recovery is possible!

- There are many pathways to recovery
- People attain and stay in recovery every day

Our Stories Have Power

The more our policymakers, our allies, friends, and neighbors and employers hear our stories and understand that we can and do get well the more people will seek help that they and their loved ones need in order to recover.

People in Recovery and their Friends and Families can be some of the Best Advocates, but...



Barriers to Advocacy

- Stigma and shame keep recovering people in the shadows
- Potential discrimination can add to the challenges of speaking out
- Misunderstanding surrounding the 12 step traditions of anonymity limit our voice

Putting a Face & a Voice on Recovery-**The** **Message**

- I'm in long-term recovery which means...
- Committed to recovery and joining with thousands of others to organize so that we can expand the opportunities for others to achieve long-term recovery
- Long-term recovery has given me and my family new hope and stability
- My life and the lives of millions of others like me are better as a result

How to Respect the Traditions

- Focus on the **WHAT** (Recovery)...
- Not the **HOW** (12 Steps)
 - *My name is Jill Fuqua and I am a person in long term recovery which means...
I haven't had a drink or a drug in...*
 - *My name is John Smith and I am a family member of a person in long term recovery which means...*
- It is up to us to define Recovery. If we don't someone else will...incorrectly

What's not in the Message and Why

- *I'm an addict (or alcoholic)*
- *I'm a recovering addict (or alcoholic)*
- *Addiction is a disease*
- *Information about 12-step programs, for examples membership in AA or NA or Al-Anon*
- *A "definition" of recovery*

Changing Public Perception

- We educate by sharing our stories of success!!!
 - MAKE IT PERSONAL
- The public knows what addiction looks like
- We need to show them what Recovery looks like
 - Put a FACE on Recovery

Core Messages

The Problem:

- Need more opportunities for people to achieve long-term recovery
- Need more effective treatment and recovery support services
- There are discriminatory policies
- The public and policymakers don't know about the reality of recovery

Opportunities to Advocate

- Intervention
- Celebrity Rehab
- Christian Dior Addict
 - All these campaigns provided important opportunities to speak out and advocate

Examples of Public Policy

- >.08 DUI legislation
- >No smoking ordinances in public buildings
- >Expungement of non-violent felony convictions

IAIC At The Legislature

- Enacted Addiction Licensure to ensure quality care and consumer protection
- Enacted Legislation to Expunge Criminal Record to enhance Employment

HERE'S JUST ONE EXAMPLE!

ADVOCACY FOR ADDICTIONS LICENSURE LED TO:

- Collaboration
- Legislation
- Science to Service Competencies
- Quality care standards
- Education & experience for licensure
- Recovery Supports

Advocacy also can Eliminate Employment Barriers

- There are collateral consequences that remain long after criminal obligations to the court have been served.
- One of the greatest lingering consequences is the barrier to employment caused by arrest and conviction records.

HEA 1482 Criminal Record Expungement

JULY 1, 2014

What are the crimes that can be expunged?

- This is a very broad question.
- There are numerous criminal offenses that now are subject to expungement in Indiana.
- A general answer would be almost all alcohol, drug, and theft related offenses would qualify for expungement.
- However, there are instances where an individual may not qualify for expungement because of the individual's post-sentencing activities.

HEA 1482 Criminal Record Expungement

What crimes *cannot* be expunged?

- A general listing of crimes that **cannot** be expunged would be:
 - sex crimes (rape, child molesting, child seduction, incest, sexual battery, etc...);
 - official misconduct by a public servant; human and sexual trafficking crimes;
 - any individual who has been classified as a sex or violent offender;
 - and homicide crimes (murder, voluntary manslaughter, involuntary manslaughter, reckless homicide, etc...).

Public Policy Issues Pew Study

- **Indiana's Crime rate has been stable since 2000**
- **But prison population has increased 40% since 2000**
- **Nonviolent offenders account for most of the growth**

Pew Study Recommendations 2010

- Graduate drug penalties
- Restructure theft penalties
- Give judges more sentencing options
- Increase access to community based substance abuse treatment
- Probation and parole need to integrate
- Incentivize judges to not send people to DOC

Criminal Code Evaluation Commission 2012

- 40% of those going to DOC in this study were alcohol/drug related 25% were theft/receiving stolen property
- Majority were spending <180 days in DOC
TX not available for sentences under one year
- Graduate drug penalties
- Establish a felony theft threshold

Criminal Law and Sentencing Policy

- Currently reviewing and revising the entire criminal code HB 1006
- Sentencing guidelines still being debated
- Studying recidivism

Elevator Speech

- **Show the impact and tell a story.** Don't just give a statistic of how many people you serve. Bring a face to that number. Talk about your work in a real way, letting your audience know the impact and the importance for the people you serve.

How Can YOU Advocate?

- The Easiest Way is EM
- Go to www.mhai.net
 - If you don't know your legislator's name or district number, you can find it by inserting your zip code.
 - You can em your legislator from that web page

MHAI Web Page

Go to: “About Advocacy”

Mental Health America of Indiana's Advocacy Network is a powerful voice for change that is made up of thousands of individuals nationwide who take an active role in protecting America's mental health through legislative advocacy.

- [Click here](#) to contact your legislator.
- [Click here](#) to visit the Indiana Legislature Home Page.
- [Click here](#) to view 2012 Legislative Agenda.

Another Way to Advocate is by Telephone

- Dial (317) 232-9400 Local or 1-(800) 382-9467 Toll Free to reach the Senate.
- Dial (317) 232-9700 Local or 1-(800) 382-9841 Toll Free to reach the House of Representatives.

Not Necessary to Speak to YOUR Legislator Directly

It is very important that you leave a message with the following information:

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- Who you represent.
- How you would like your representative/senator to vote on bill #

Keep your call short and to the point.

- **For example:** My name is Joe Smith, my address is 1430 South Pine Street, my telephone number is (317) 842-9001. I urge Representative Jones to vote yes on S.B. 100, because it will enable my organization to continue to serve our community by saving us \$4,000.
- Never be argumentative. Just express your opinions. Say why you feel the way you do, and state what action you want your legislator to take.
- Always thank the legislator or staff member for their time.

A Better Way to Advocate is with a Letter

Next to a personal visit, a personal letter is most effective.

The Power of a Letter

- Letters from the District permit the legislator to assess the views of his or her constituency. YOUR letters can and should be part of that input.
- Legislators welcome constructive, clearly written and timely opinions from the voting public. YOUR letters can make a difference.

The Letter

When to Write

- In general, write early. If you know a specific issue or platform your organization will forward, make your legislator aware of this before the legislative session commences, if possible.

Stationery

- Write on personal stationery, plain paper or organization letterhead if you have it.

Return Address

- Put your return address on the letter, not just the envelope. Envelopes are often thrown away before the letter is answered.

Identify Yourself

- If you are writing on your own behalf or as president of an organization or chairman of an association, say so in the letter.

The Point of YOUR letter

Identify Your Subject

- State the name of the legislation about which you are writing.
- Include the bill number if you know it. Sometimes several bills are introduced that deal with the same subject matter. You can obtain the bill number from MHAJ Action Alerts or by calling the Legislative Services Agency, Legislative Information Center at (317) 232-9856.

State Your Position

- Explain how a bill will affect you, your family, your business, or even your state or community. Write sincerely and simply from your knowledge and life experience.

The Best Way to Advocate is with a Meeting

- The opportunity to meet and get acquainted with elected officials should be acted upon whenever possible.
- It is through personal relationships established over time that people can best make their voices heard in governmental processes.
- Politicians typically are happy to meet with constituents; their job depends on having voters know them and their views.
- On the other hand, there are many people competing for a legislator's time.
- Thus, it is important to decide in advance what message should be conveyed or what request will be made at a meeting.

Setting Up the Meeting

- Call the appropriate office when making an appointment.
- Try to provide as much advance notice as possible.
- Be prepared to estimate the length of time your meeting will take, who will be with you and who they are, and the subject you want to discuss.
- Be sure you have some background information on any public official with whom you plan to meet.

Planning the Meeting

- If several people are going to the meeting, select one person to act as a spokesperson ahead of time and agree on what the position is and how it should be presented.
- Be sure you understand the issue you plan to discuss and related legislative proposals, as well as specific reasons why you support or oppose it.
- Be sure your story fits well with the issue you are supporting or opposing.

The Meeting

- While it is certainly acceptable to disagree with a legislator or staff member on the issue, do not be argumentative.
 - There are always two sides to every issue. It is better to leave on friendly terms so that you will be welcome next time.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions or solicit questions.
 - Public officials will be impressed by your willingness to learn more about an issue from them, and they will appreciate your ability to answer any questions they may have.
- You should ask how a legislator how he expects to vote on an issue, but you should not try to force a commitment.
 - Quite justifiably, many legislators prefer to hold their decisions in abeyance until the hearing on a bill and the final debates are completed.
- Follow up your meeting with a personal letter, thanking the legislator and staff members for their time and attention to your views.

Stay Informed

*Fill Out Form to be added to Mental Health
America's Public Policy Database.*

Don't forget:

*You can make a
difference through
Advocacy!*

Contact Information

Mental Health America of Indiana
1431 North Delaware Street
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202
(317) 638-3501
www.mhai.net

Addictions Certification
Questions? Contact Stan
DeKemper at
director@icaada.org

Indiana Addictions Issues Coalition

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