

# Substance Abuse, Families, and Recovery

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## ACTION

- Pass the Child Protection/Alcohol and Drug Partnership Act (S. 644), which would provide grants to states to help families affected by alcohol and drug abuse who come to the attention of the child welfare system to get comprehensive, family-oriented substance abuse treatment.
- Increase funding for the Substance Abuse Block Grant, Substance Abuse Treatment programs, and Substance Abuse Prevention programs, which will expand the availability of effective treatment, recovery, and prevention services for alcohol and drug problems.
- Reauthorize programs under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and provide adequate resources for community-based, coordinated system of comprehensive family drug and alcohol treatment.

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## HISTORY

### **Child Protection/Alcohol and Drug Partnership Act**

The Child Protection/Alcohol and Drug Partnership Act is sponsored by Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and John D. Rockefeller (D-WV). This bipartisan bill would provide \$1.9 billion over five years to state child welfare and substance abuse agencies that agree to take steps together to develop and increase treatment services, establish appropriate screening and assessment tools, or improve strategies to engage and retain parents in treatment and provide aftercare support. The activities must be directed to families with substance abuse problems who come to the attention of the child welfare system.

Due to the epidemic of substance abuse, millions of American children lack safe and permanent families who can help them grow into healthy, productive adults. This legislation would give state child welfare and alcohol and drug agencies the flexibility to decide how best to use these funds to enhance family treatment. They could use them to develop or expand comprehensive individualized alcohol and drug abuse prevention and treatment services that include

- preventive and early intervention services for children that address their mental, emotional, and developmental needs;
- prevention and early intervention services for parents at risk for substance abuse;
- comprehensive home-based, outpatient, and family-oriented residential treatment options;
- aftercare support for families in recovery that promotes child safety and family stability; and
- services and supports that promote parent-child interaction and focus on children and other family members.

### **Funding Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention Programs**

Numerous studies have found that alcohol and drug treatment programs are effective in short- and long-term recovery. Nearly one-third of those in treatment achieve permanent abstinence from their first attempt at recovery. An additional one-third have periods of relapse but eventually achieve long-term abstinence. One-third have chronic relapses that result in premature death from substance abuse and related consequences.

The Substance Abuse Performance Partnership Block Grant and the Substance Abuse Treatment Programs of Regional and National Significance improve the lives of individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug abuse by ensuring access to clinically sound, comprehensive family treatment that reduces the health and social costs to our communities and the nation. No single treatment approach is effective for all people, but we know that for families who come to the attention of child welfare, comprehensive family treatment

has been successful. These federal funds support multiple treatment modalities and evaluate treatment effectiveness, and these results are used to enhance treatment and recovery approaches.

In FY 2004, the Substance Abuse Block Grant was funded at \$1.7 billion, and the Substance Abuse Treatment Programs received \$421.9 million in funds.

Substance Abuse Prevention Grants provide funding to develop policies, programs, and services to prevent the onset of illegal drug use, to prevent underage alcohol and tobacco use, and to reduce the negative consequences of using substances. By building the capacity of states, communities, and other groups, these prevention activities can help reduce substance abuse at the family, workplace, community, and national levels. Comprehensive programs, community involvement, and partnership among all sectors of society will help strengthen treatment, prevention, and recovery in families, particularly those who come to the attention of the child welfare system. The Substance Abuse Prevention Grants were funded at \$199.7 million in FY 2004.

### **SAMHSA Reauthorization**

Programs under SAMHSA are expected to be reauthorized in 2005. CWLA will focus on the need to direct funding to those families entering the child welfare system and the family courts that are affected by substance abuse. Substance abuse affects both parenting and the development of children. An estimated 11% of all children live in families where one or more parents abuse alcohol or other drugs; up to 80% of children in the child welfare system are affected by substance abuse.

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### **KEY FACTS**

- Alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems devastate the lives of hundreds of thousands of American children and their families each year. A major factor in child abuse and neglect, substance abuse is associated with the placement of at least half of the children in the custody of child welfare.<sup>1</sup>
- Substance abuse is a treatable public health problem with cost-effective solutions.<sup>2</sup> Good assessment, early intervention, and comprehensive treatment are the keys to determining when and if a child can safely stay at home or be reunited with his or her family.
- Eighty-five percent of states surveyed report parental substance abuse and poverty are the top two problems in child protective caseloads.<sup>3</sup>
- States spent \$81.3 billion dealing with AOD problems in 1998, or about 13% of their budgets. Just 4% of the amount spent, or \$3 billion, went toward prevention and treatment programs.<sup>4</sup>
- Eighty percent of child welfare professionals surveyed say substance abuse exacerbates most cases of child abuse and neglect they face.<sup>5</sup>
- Approximately 67% of the parents with children in the child welfare system required substance abuse treatment services, but child welfare agencies were able to provide treatment for only 31% of them.<sup>6</sup>
- Children whose parents abuse drugs and alcohol are almost three times more likely to be abused and more than four times more likely to be neglected than are children of parents who are not substance abusers.<sup>7</sup>
- Women who stayed in comprehensive substance abuse treatment longer than three months were more likely to remain alcohol and drug free, compared with those who left within the first three months of treatment (68% vs. 48%).<sup>8</sup>
- Seventy-five percent of those receiving comprehensive substance abuse treatment had physical custody of one or more children six months after treatment discharge.<sup>9</sup>

- A lack of substance abuse treatment programs creates barriers to achieving permanency for foster care children; 33% of states surveyed noted this as a barrier.<sup>10</sup>
- Residential treatment costs for women with children were offset three to four times by savings from reduced costs of crime, foster care, TANF, and adverse birth outcomes.<sup>11</sup>
- Four states (Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, and New Hampshire) have been addressing the needs of parents with substance abuse problems under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects. In FY 2004, preference will be given to states that propose projects designed to identify and address parental substance abuse problems that endanger children and result in the placement of children in foster care.<sup>12</sup>

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