



ONE VOICE

Advocating for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

COMMUNITY-BASED SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY, IMPROVE LIVES AND SAVE MONEY

In times of fiscal crisis, it is imperative for policymakers to examine where our tax dollars are spent and the return on investment of those dollars.

Countless studies have shown that public safety can best be served by appropriately diverting offenders who have mental illnesses or substance use disorders and who have not committed violent crimes into programs that help them manage and stabilize their illnesses and remain in recovery. In Florida, the combined efforts of law enforcement officials, the court system and community-based mental health and substance abuse providers is **effectively reducing recidivism rates and cutting costs.**

As an example, the cost for a community-based crisis stabilization bed is \$290 per day while placement at an inpatient psychiatric forensic facility is more than \$700 per day. In addition, based on an average stay of 22 months, the cost of a community drug treatment bed is \$10,920 while a prison bed for the same period is \$36,960. **After 36 months, 93% of offenders who completed community drug treatment had no recommitment to prison.**

Cost efficiencies and success rates like these can be found throughout Florida thanks to the collaborative efforts of substance abuse and mental health treatment providers, drug courts, mental health courts and corrections and law enforcement officers working in partnership with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Children and Families. Conversely, we know from experience that cuts to community-based programs can be felt almost immediately through increases in domestic violence and child abuse and sharp increases in our court, jail, emergency room and social service systems.

The value of Florida's mental health and substance abuse funding is already **48% less than 10 years ago** when adjusted for inflation. Even during plentiful economic times, Florida's programs ranked near the bottom when compared to spending in other states, making them even more vulnerable to potential cuts this year. Maintaining current funding levels for these programs is vital to public safety and the well-being of thousands of Florida families.

**ON BEHALF OF NEARLY 200 FLORIDA PARTNERS IN CRISIS MEMBERS
THROUGHOUT OUR STATE, PLEASE SUPPORT CONTINUED FUNDING FOR
MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS
AND THEIR PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**



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2010 Legislative Priorities

✓ Maintain Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment Funding

It is critical that mental health and substance abuse services vital to our communities' health and public safety be preserved. Currently, Florida is only meeting 42% of the need for adult mental health services and 7% of the need for substance abuse services for adults. Meanwhile, the number of Floridians with mental illnesses who are in prison has increased 36% in the past five years.

✓ Maintain the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program

In 23 counties across the state, communities have used these grant funds to create innovative services that shift care of offenders with mental illnesses and/or co-occurring substance use disorders from the most expensive deep-end treatment settings to community-based programs. State funds of \$3 million per year matched with local dollars have resulted in more than \$21 million in total funds and thousands of dollars in savings to law enforcement, jail bed days, emergency rooms and prison beds. This year, 11 implementation matching grants are in place in **Alachua, Broward, Hillsborough, Lee, Leon, Miami-Dade, Nassau, Orange, Pinellas, Polk and St. Lucie counties.**

✓ Support passage of the Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (SB 1140 by Sen. Fasano)

This budget neutral proposal will create a comprehensive continuum of specialized home and community-based services designed to address the needs of people with severe and persistent mental illnesses who are involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.

✓ Support Affordable Housing (HB 665 by Rep. Aubuchon)

Experience has shown that housing is essential to the recovery of individuals living with mental illnesses. Access to safe and affordable housing has been shown to increase treatment success, help individuals avoid such settings as jails, crisis units and hospitals and maintain their recovery. This bill will include people with mental illnesses and substance use disorders among those eligible for housing assistance.

Many thanks to the FL Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association, FL Council for Community Mental Health, FL Substance Abuse and Mental Health Corporation and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Florida for their assistance in preparing these materials.