



THE REBECCA PROJECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Health Safety and Dignity for Vulnerable Families

FAMILY TREATMENT EVIDENCE-BASED SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

In 2001, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) evaluated its Pregnant and Postpartum Women and Their Infants Program, which provides comprehensive, family-based treatment for substance abusing mothers and their children. Major findings of this study, at 6 months post treatment, include:

- 60% of the mothers remained alcohol and drug-free.
- Drug-related offenses declined from 28% to 7%.
- 38% obtained employment and 21% enrolled in educational/vocational training.
- 75% of the mothers had physical custody of one or more children.¹

In 2003 an additional cross-site evaluation of 24 residential family-based treatment programs 6 months after post-treatment revealed successful outcomes for mothers and their children:

- 60% of the mothers remained completely clean and sober 6 months after discharge.
- Criminal arrests declined by 43%.
- 44% of the children were returned from foster care.
- 88% of the children treated in the programs with their mothers remained stabilized, 6 months after discharge.
- Employment rose from 7% before treatment to 37% post-treatment.
- Enrollment in educational and vocational training increased from 2% prior to treatment to 19% post-treatment.²

FAMILY TREATMENT AS COST-EFFECTIVE

When family treatment costs are compared to the costs of incarcerating a substance abusing mother and placing her children in foster-care, the savings to the state and nation are significant. For example:

- Family treatment costs average between \$14,000 to \$25,000 per family per year depending on the state (for example, in Utah family treatment costs about \$14,000 and in New York treatment is approximately \$25,000 per family per treatment episode).³
- The average cost of one child in the foster care system is \$47,000 per year.⁴

¹ Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, "Benefits of Residential Treatment for Pregnant and Parenting Women." Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

² Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. "Residential Women and Children/Pregnant and Post-Partum Fact Sheets." Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

³ Ibid, fact sheet on program costs.

⁴ National Center for Housing and Child Welfare, fact sheet November 2008.

- The average cost of state and federal incarceration of a mother is \$30, 000 per year.⁵
- In a 2002 study on Arkansas treatment outcomes, the net economic benefits of family-based treatment (including medical and psychiatric problems, medical and psychiatric care, employment and days engaged in illegal activities) amounts to \$17, 143 in savings per family compared to \$8, 090 for standard care.⁶

NEED FOR EXPANDED FAMILY TREATMENT CAPACITY

- Between one-third to two-thirds of parents involved in the child welfare system require substance abuse treatment, yet existing treatment meets less than one third of that need.⁷
- Alcohol and drug-related cases are more likely to result in foster care than are other child welfare cases.⁸
- Only ten percent of child welfare agencies report that they can successfully find substance abuse programs for mothers and their children who require the treatment in a timely manner.⁹

⁵ National Institute of Corrections. *Gender Responsive Strategies: Research, Practice, and Guiding Principles for Women Offenders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2003.

⁶ French, M.T., McCollister, K.E. Cacciola, J., Durrell, J. & Stephans, R.L. (2002). Benefit-cost analysis of addiction treatment in Arkansas: specialty and standard residential programs for pregnant and parenting women. *Substance Abuse*, 23, 31-51.

⁷ ³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration(SAMHSA), *Blending Perspectives and Building Common Ground 109* (1999).

⁸ Id, pg. 43

⁹ Children's Welfare League of America, *Alcohol and Other Drug Survey of State Child Welfare Agencies* Washington, D.C.(1998). These child welfare agencies report not being able to find appropriate treatment programs for parents within a thirty-day period.