



Effectiveness of Drug Treatment

and the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act
A California Voter Initiative — November 2000

The Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000 seeks to divert non-violent drug offenders out of the criminal justice system and into drug treatment. Research shows that treatment improves drug users' health, reduces criminal activity, and saves precious tax dollars.

Treatment improves the health of drug addicts and reduces related health care costs placed on the public. The 1994 California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment (CALDATA) found that people receiving alcohol and drug treatment were hospitalized one-third less often after completing treatment than before entering such a program. And the 1996 National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study (NTIES) found that substance abuse-related medical visits decreased by more than 50 percent following treatment, while in-patient mental health visits decreased by more than 25 percent.

Treatment is the most cost-effective way to deal with drug dependent persons. The CALDATA report found that a dollar invested in alcohol and drug treatment results in over seven dollars in social savings due to reductions in crime and health care costs. Another 1994 study by the Rand Corporation found that each additional dollar invested in treatment for cocaine addiction resulted in \$7.46 worth of savings in societal cost due to reduced crime and increased productivity. Treatment was rated as 14 times more effective than incarceration in reducing these social costs of drug abuse.

Treatment also reduces the criminal activity of drug dependent persons. According to the CALDATA report, criminal activity declined by two-thirds after treatment. The NTIES found that individuals who completed treatment were arrested 64 percent less likely to be arrested in the 12 months following treatment than they had been in the 12 months preceding treatment. The 1997 Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study (DATOS) found that outpatient methadone treatment reduced criminal activity by 57 percent.

Finally, treatment can improve employment opportunities and reduce dependence on welfare for drug dependent individuals. The NTIES research found that 19 percent more persons received income from jobs within 12 months of completing treatment, and 11 percent fewer persons received welfare benefits.

An additional dollar invested in treatment for cocaine addiction results in \$7.46 worth of savings in societal costs.

— *Controlling Cocaine: Supply vs. Demand Programs*, Rand, '94

Outpatient methadone treatment reduces criminal activity by 57 percent.

— *Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, '97

Following treatment, 19 percent more persons received income from jobs and 11 percent fewer persons received welfare income.

— *The National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, '96

All research references are available upon request.

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