

# Fact Sheet: Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)  
1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 605, Washington, D.C. 20036

Michelle Dirst, Director of Public Policy – Phone (202) 293-0090 X109 Email: [mdirst@nasadad.org](mailto:mdirst@nasadad.org)  
Matt Scaff, Public Policy Associate – Phone (202) 293-0090 x102 Email: [mscaff@nasadad.org](mailto:mscaff@nasadad.org)

## BACKGROUND

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, the cornerstone of the States' substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery systems, accounts for approximately 40 percent of expenditures by State substance abuse agencies across the country. The SAPT Block Grant is administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## SAPT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

- \$1,758.7m in FY 2008
- \$1,778.6m in FY 2009
- \$1,798.6m in FY 2010
- \$1,782.6m in FY 2011
- Congress appropriated \$1,800.3m but HHS “tapped” or redirected \$21.5 million (1.25% of the total) to reduce the total amount available to \$1,778.6m in FY 2012
- Field recommends increase of \$50 million in FY 2013

## SCOPE AND FINANCIAL COST OF ADDICTION

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 23.1 million people aged 12 or older had an illicit drug or alcohol use problem in 2010. During the same year, approximately 2.6 million received treatment for such a problem at a specialty facility. As a result, 20.5 million people needed but did not receive services in 2010 in a specialty facility. The economic impact of addiction is staggering. Research found that when substance abuse spending was \$15.5 billion in 1998, the total economic costs of alcohol abuse were approximately \$184.6 billion and the total economic costs for drug abuse were \$143.4 billion (Harwood, 2000).

## ADDICTION IS ASSOCIATED WITH MANY OTHER DISEASES

In a 2004 study appearing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, researchers examined the top nine “actual causes of death” defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as factors that contribute to leading killers such as heart disease, cancer and stroke. Tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs – killing 530,000 Americans in 2000 – were three of the top nine.

## FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS IN ADDICTION SERVICES SAVE MONEY

In 2006, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) noted that for every dollar spent on addiction treatment programs, there is an estimated \$4 to \$7 reduction in the cost of drug related crimes. With outpatient programs, total savings can exceed costs by a ratio of 12:1.

## SAPT BLOCK GRANT PRODUCES RESULTS

The SAPT Block Grant is distributed by formula to all States and jurisdictions. The program provided treatment services for approximately 2.3 million client admissions in FY 2010. During the same year, at discharge from treatment, 73.7% were abstinent from illegal drug use; 78.2% were abstinent from alcohol use; and 92% had no involvement with the criminal justice system.

## INDEPENDENT EVALUATION FINDS SAPT BLOCK GRANT EFFECTIVE

An independent study of the SAPT Block Grant, released in June 2009, found the program to be effective in a number of areas, including (1) positive outcomes as measured by increased abstinence from alcohol and other drugs; increased employment; decreased criminal justice involvement and other indicators; (2) improvement of State infrastructure and capacity; (3) development and maintenance of State agency collaborations; (4) and effective planning, monitoring and oversight.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES SPENDING REPRESENTS TINY FRACTION OF ALL HEALTH EXPENDITURES

According to SAMHSA's *National Expenditures for Mental Health Services and Substance Abuse Treatment, 1993-2003* (2007), substance abuse expenditures represented 1.3% of all healthcare expenditures in 2003 (\$21 billion for substance abuse vs. \$1.6 trillion for all health expenditures). Using inflation adjusted terms, the growth rate for all health spending from 1993 to 2003 was 4.6%, while the growth rate for substance abuse services spending during this same time period was 1.4%.

## PREVENTION SET-ASIDE

Federal statute requires States to direct at least twenty percent of the SAPT Block Grant toward substance abuse prevention services. The prevention set-aside, managed by CSAP's Division of State Programs, is a core component of each State's prevention system. Overall, SAPT Block Grant funding makes up 64 percent of State/Territory-coordinated primary prevention funding. In 21 States, the prevention set-aside represents 75 percent or more of the State agency's prevention budget.

## ABOUT NASADAD

NASADAD represents the Nation's State substance abuse agencies, also known as Single State Authorities (SSAs). NASADAD's mission is to promote effective and efficient State substance abuse service systems. The association's two component organizations are the National Prevention Network (NPN) and National Treatment Network (NTN).