

**Jason Brame**

**From:** Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative [jasonb@communityadvocates.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 10, 2009 9:42 AM  
**To:** Jason Brame  
**Subject:** April 2 Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI) e-Newsletter



## e-Newsletter

**In This Issue**

April 2, 2009

**Treating Alcoholism  
Appropriately is Important**

**Step**

**Milwaukee County's TAD  
Program Reports Positive 2008**

**Outcomes**

**Collaboration Needed Among  
Addiction Treatment Providers**

**MATI Welcomes Debra J. Kraft  
and Genyne Edwards**

**MATI Blog Up and Running**

**Upcoming MATI  
Committee Meetings**

**Program and Policy**  
 • 9-11 a.m. Wed., April 8  
 (Milwaukee Enterprise Center,  
 2821 N. 4th St., Rm. 300)

**Program and Policy**  
 • 9-11 a.m. Wed., May 13  
 (location TBD)

**Dear Jason,**

April is [Alcohol Awareness Month](#), an opportunity to raise awareness of Wisconsin's culture of alcohol abuse and its lack of sufficient treatment options.

Despite some of the highest alcohol consumption rates in the nation, Wisconsin does not offer sufficient treatment options for people suffering from alcohol abuse. According to a recent [report](#) by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, **in Wisconsin in 2005-06, 21 percent of individuals age 18-25 needed but did not receive treatment for alcohol use**, compared to 17 percent nationally -- the fourth consecutive year Wisconsin's results were higher than the national average.

For more information about the gap in available addiction treatment as well as the cost of untreated substance abuse in Wisconsin, download the [Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap](#) fact sheet from the [Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative Web site](#).

## Treating Alcoholism

Steering Committee  
 . 9-11 a.m. Thur., May 14  
 (Milwaukee Enterprise Center,  
 2821 N. 4th St., Room 300)

### Resources

[MATI Web Site](#)

[MATI Blog](#)

[Closing the Addiction  
 Treatment Gap  
 \(Open Society Institute\)](#)

[Community Advocates Public  
 Policy Institute](#)

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## Appropriately is Important Step

A Guest Editorial in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel by  
 Hilary Chavez, MATI Program Coordinator

*Published on Wednesday, April 1*

Every day, we wake up to a new story in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about the effects of alcohol abuse in Wisconsin.

Last week, we read about the eight-time OWI offender arrested in Mequon, winter's 15 alcohol-related snowmobile deaths and homicide charges filed against the Marinette man who, after spending nine hours in a bar in January, hit a van carrying a father and four children, killing them all. The Journal Sentinel's [Wasted in Wisconsin](#) series vividly chronicled how alcohol can destroy lives, and every new death, every new arrest, causes fresh waves of outrage.

April is [Alcohol Awareness Month](#), an opportunity to review the impact of alcohol on our state. Our jails are overflowing with inmates sentenced for alcohol-related crimes, yet drunken driving remains at epidemic levels. Annual costs associated with alcohol abuse in Wisconsin total \$2.7 billion, sapping taxpayer funds and driving up insurance premiums. Our complicity with underage and binge drinking has put us all in peril. Alcoholism is a public health issue, a social issue and a law enforcement problem.

Read Hilary's full April 1 [editorial](#) in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

## Milwaukee County's TAD Program Reports Positive 2008 Outcomes

From March 2007 through December 2008, 59 percent of participants in Milwaukee County's Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD) program conducted themselves well enough to justify reducing or dismissing their charges, according to a report by Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm.

According to Justice 2000 TAD Program statistics, 798 persons participated in this program and in 468 of the cases the Court was satisfied that the individual had made significant progress in taking responsibility and becoming accountable for their actions and were beginning to contribute in the community in a positive way.

As a result, criminal charges in these cases were either reduced or dismissed, saving taxpayers the cost of funding 4,245 prison bed days and 22,122 local jail bed days for an estimated "out of pocket" savings of approximately \$1,018,415.

Moreover, when the researchers at the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute followed up, they found that among TAD graduates only 2 percent were admitted to state prison after their discharge from the program within the time frame of their study (January 2007 through Aug. 31, 2008).

## Low-Level Funding Threatens Progress

TAD has been funded by \$375,000 per year in state money since its inception in Milwaukee County in 2007. In 2008 the program stayed in operation in large part because of nearly \$250,000 in hard cash matches and in-kind contributions from the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, Milwaukee County Circuit Courts and Justice 2000, which paid for drug testing, and provided for substance abuse treatment and the work of diversion specialists. This additional funding is not expected to return.

Government funding is slated to remain at the same level of \$375,000 per year through 2011. Administrators fear that this funding will force a decrease in the number of people that TAD can serve.

For more information on TAD see a [news release](#) by the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office and [recent coverage](#) in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

## Collaboration Needed Among Addiction Treatment Providers

### Guest Essay by Rick Deines, Serenity Inns

Rick Deines, Advisor to the Staff and Board of Serenity Inns, Milwaukee, has penned a [guest essay](#) for MATI's blog calling for increased collaboration among addiction treatment service providers as a way of surviving recent funding drops.

The contention of his article is that if existing programs seek each other out for quality conversation based on transparency and accountability, then a total community approach to treating drug addiction in Milwaukee can be created. In Deines' estimation, these proposals can begin immediately -- it is time to discover each other in more depth and to be empowered for the task.

He writes:

Two clear opportunities present themselves: (1) Clarifying the role and relationship of each program and discovering ways of collaborating; and (2) Increasing public awareness of the reality and staggering cost of drug abuse in the Milwaukee area.

Developing clear responses to these challenges would have the end result of serving more people and building longer-term effectiveness into each program.

Keys to these opportunities include overcoming the isolation of each program from the other; and educating the public more effectively about the realities of drug abuse.

Dealing with both of these challenges is a key ingredient to a longer-term cooperative strategy for releasing the resources of the community toward effective recovery programs.

You can read Rick's [full essay](#) on the MATI blog.

## MATI Welcomes Debra J. Kraft and Genyne Edwards

Welcome Debra J. Kraft, MATI Counsel and Program Director (left); and Genyne Edwards, MATI Advocacy Consultant.



**Debra J. Kraft** is researching the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 and whether or not it is applicable to Medicaid managed care programs. Debra will also work on the Mental Health Policy Initiative, a multiyear project that aims to improve state and local policies for individuals suffering from mental illness.

A former attorney for both business and government, Debra served as General Counsel at the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing, the agency that oversees health care and other professional licensing, rulemaking and discipline in the state. She earned her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Wisconsin and continued her studies at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

You can reach Debra at [debrak@communityadvocates.net](mailto:debrak@communityadvocates.net) or call (414) 475-6253 ext. 306.

**Genyne Edwards** is coordinating MATI's statewide advocacy efforts to convince executive and legislative decision-makers of the importance of comprehensive health care reform that includes parity for addiction treatment in public and private health insurance. The strategy is broad and diverse, and includes mental health and health care reform experts, and members of the business and insurance communities, among others. As the coalition continues to grow, Genyne hopes to connect with anyone who has an interest in or goal of financing addiction and mental health treatment. You can reach Genyne at [eingenuity@gmail.com](mailto:eingenuity@gmail.com) or call (414) 475-6253.

In addition to her advocacy work for MATI, Genyne is the Program Director for the Milwaukee Mosaic Partnerships Program and Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee-Equal Rights Commission.

Genyne is a graduate of Marquette University Law School and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Leadership and Supervision from Purdue University.

## MATI Blog Up and Running

### Seeking Comments, Content for Blog, e-Newsletter

Don't forget to visit and bookmark MATI's [blog](#) for the latest program updates and information about health care, addiction and treatment. The MATI blog can be found at <http://ca-mati-blog.blogspot.com/>

We hope that you will join in the conversation by leaving your thoughts and comments. And we encourage you to submit your addiction- and treatment-related content to be posted on the blog, such as new studies and reports, notices of your seminars, workshops and other community events relevant to the MATI audience, etc.

Additionally, we encourage you to submit information for our e-Newsletter. Please contact Jason Brame, MATI communications coordinator, at (414) 475-6253 ext. 303 or email [jasonb@communityadvocates.net](mailto:jasonb@communityadvocates.net).

**The Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI)** is a collaboration among local stakeholders -- including treatment providers, public health agencies, law enforcement, faith-based agencies, advocates and members of the recovery community -- to close the addiction treatment gap in Milwaukee County and ensure that everyone who needs treatment can receive it. MATI is sponsored by a grant from the Open Society Institute, Baltimore, with additional funding from the Helen Bader Foundation and the Zilber Family Foundation. Visit MATI online at [www.ca-mati.org](http://www.ca-mati.org).

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