

Jason Brame

From: Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative [jasonb@communityadvocates.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 01, 2009 3:11 PM
To: Jason Brame
Subject: Sept. 1 Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI) e-Newsletter



e-Newsletter

In This Issue

Sept. 1, 2009

[Meta House Advocate Details Her Recovery from Addiction in Journal Sentinel Op-Ed](#)

[Milwaukee Advocates, Treatment Providers Renew Their Call for Increased Addiction Treatment Funding, Access](#)

[Advocacy Workshop, Wednesday, Sept. 9](#)

Upcoming MATI Committee Meetings

Program and Policy Committee

NOTE: The Advocacy Workshop replaces the September Program and Policy Committee meeting. Register for the workshop by Friday, Sept. 4.

• **Wed., Oct. 14, 9-10:30 a.m.**
 Topic: Addiction as a public health issue. (Location TBD)

Dear Jason,

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. This is an opportunity for us all to promote the societal benefits of alcohol and drug use disorder treatment, laud the contributions of treatment providers, and promote the message that recovery from alcohol and drug use disorders in all its forms is possible.

Throughout the month, the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative will be sending out emails detailing local stories of recovery, facts about the treatment gap, and information on how you can get involved in closing the treatment gap.

Please consider forwarding this email to a friend or colleague who might be interested. If you would like to become a MATI partner, contact Hilary Chavez, MATI program coordinator, at (414) 270-2950 or hilaryc@communityadvocates.net.

Learn more at www.recoverymonth.gov.

Meta House Advocate Details Her

**Upcoming MATI
Work Group Meetings
Communications**

· **Wed., Sept. 16, 9-10 a.m.**
(Springfield College, 744
N. 4th St., Ste 300)
Contact: [Hilary Chavez](#),
(414) 270-2950.

Advocacy

· **Time TBD.** Contact: [Genyne Edwards](#), (414) 270-2952.

System Redesign

· **Time TBD.** Contact: [Robert Cherry](#), (414) 270-2953.

Resources

[MATI Web Site](#)

[MATI Blog](#)

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

[Community Advocates
Public Policy Institute](#)

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Recovery from Addiction in Journal Sentinel Op-Ed

This Op-Ed was published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Tuesday, Sept. 1 in observance of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. Lisa Molet-Smith is a Milwaukee child-care teacher, recovery advocate and Meta House volunteer.

Close Addiction Treatment Gap

By Lisa Molet-Smith

My recovery from drug addiction began with a single step: On New Year's Eve 1997, I stepped off the porch of a Milwaukee drug house, determined, after 10 years of destructive addiction, to get well. Casual drinking and recreational drug use had snowballed, and my life had spiraled into crime, homelessness and prostitution. Unsure of my ability to stay clean, I no longer wanted to live.

That first step took me to a soup kitchen, a second step to a downtown homeless shelter, where I was a regular guest. Stabilized by the shelter's staff, I reached out to Meta House, a Milwaukee addiction treatment center that addresses the unique recovery needs of women. At the time, I had nothing -- no money, no insurance, no ability to pay -- but an overwhelming desire to get well.

My story ends happily: During an eight-month stay at Meta House, I received extensive treatment to overcome my addiction, learning how to live life clean and sober for the first time in a decade. That was nearly 12 years ago. Since then, I have become a two-time college graduate, a child-care teacher and a volunteer working with other women suffering from an addiction.

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, an opportunity for those of us suffering from an addiction to tell of our successes and struggles, testify to the benefits of treatment and fight the misinformation that stigmatizes and marginalizes us.

Read the [full Op-Ed](#) at the *Journal Sentinel* Web site.

Milwaukee Advocates, Treatment Providers Renew Their Call for Increased Addiction Treatment Funding, Access

More than 82,000 Milwaukee County residents need treatment for an addiction to drugs or alcohol but do not receive it, according to the most recent study of the "treatment gap" by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

That's enough men and women to fill every seat at Lambeau Field, with nearly 11,000 people left over.

Nationally, only 10 percent of the more than 23 million people who need addiction treatment actually receive it.

This September, Milwaukee-area advocates and treatment providers are raising awareness of the treatment gap and its many consequences. September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, the observance of the struggles and triumphs of men and women in recovery from addiction as well as the effectiveness of treatment.

The consequences of the treatment gap are profound:

- Each year in Wisconsin, more than 2,160 deaths and 8,500 traffic crashes are attributed to alcohol and other drug use and addiction, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.
- Annual economic costs associated with drug and alcohol use in Wisconsin total \$4.6 billion.
- Nationally, untreated drug and alcohol abuse costs \$500 billion a year in health care expenditures, lost productivity and related crime, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse; and contributes to the death of more than 100,000 Americans a year.

"Recovery from addiction takes many forms, but the ability to access appropriate treatment the moment you need it -- similar to receiving treatment for any other disease -- is the most crucial component," said Mark Fossie, president and CEO of M&S Clinical Services, Inc., which provides addiction treatment to low-income men and women. "As it is, if you're poor in Milwaukee County you have little chance at getting appropriate and unlimited treatment on demand, and if you're middle class in Milwaukee County your outlook is hardly any better."

"It is scientifically proven that treatment is an effective way to help people recover from addiction, regain control of their lives and become contributing members of society," said Dr. Francine Feinberg, executive director of Meta House, a treatment center for women and their children. "Our inability and unwillingness to provide treatment to all who need it is shameful and hurts us all, costing us lives, money and resources."

Fossie and Feinberg are members of the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative, a coalition of more than 80 treatment providers, recovery advocates, faith-based organizations, and public health and law enforcement officials seeking to close the addiction treatment gap.

According to David Riemer, director of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute and MATI program director, our inability to provide sufficient addiction treatment represents a failure of the public health system.

"The ripple effects of untreated addiction reach all of us in the form of increased medical costs, wasted tax dollars and higher crime," said Riemer. "Untreated addiction destroys families, makes our roads less safe and leads to overcrowded jails. We're well past the point where addiction treatment must be a right for all, and not a privilege for a few."

Lack of Insurance, Insufficient Public Funding Lead to Gap

The causes of this treatment gap include:

- Lack of insurance. More than 500,000 are uninsured in Wisconsin -- roughly 8 percent of the population -- and more than 45 million are uninsured nationally.
- Insurance that doesn't provide full treatment benefits. Insurers routinely fail to provide coverage for addiction treatment and recovery support at the same level as other chronic illnesses by limiting the number of available inpatient and outpatient services, and imposing higher-than-normal limits on cost-sharing, deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.
- Insufficient public funding. Until health insurance reform reduces the need for special category funding, the expansion of public appropriations to pay for treatment is necessary at all levels.

"The first step to ensuring that everyone who needs addiction treatment actually receives it is to extend health insurance to cover all those who are uninsured," said Riemer. "The second step is to force insurance companies to pay for addiction treatment to the fullest levels. And the third step is to reform the system that delivers treatment so that everyone can be treated when and where it is most appropriate for them."

"The treatment gap is a result of misplaced priorities. We still have insurance companies that will limit you to 1,500 substance abuse and mental health dollars, whereas people who suffer from physical illnesses, like diabetes, have all the treatment they need," said Fossie. "Imagine if we were talking about cancer: would the public stand for telling cancer patients that they could only have a few days of treatment before sending them home? What is the difference?"

Much of this discrepancy in care stems from public policies that discriminate against people suffering from addiction. Stigmas and the long misunderstood disease of addiction have led to strong negative attitudes and stereotypes. These attitudes, in turn, have informed laws and practices that undermine acceptance of addiction as a treatable disease and health condition, and have resulted in barriers to treatment and long-term recovery.

Public education and awareness campaigns have slowly increased positive public attitudes toward addiction, and decades of federally sponsored scientific research showing how chronic abuse literally changes brain chemistry has shed light on the disease-nature of

addiction and the realities of relapse.

According to Todd Campbell, director of Marquette University's 7Cs Counseling Clinics and a MATI coalition member, people in recovery from addiction face day-to-day struggles to fight cravings for drugs and alcohol that can be as strong as cravings for food and water.

"Most people don't understand that addiction is a lifetime issue -- we've come to learn that addiction is a relapsing, remitting disease and we know that people with addictions are going to struggle," said Campbell, himself in recovery. "Though we have more resources and knowledge now at our disposal, there remains this pervasive attitude to ostracize people, that a kid using drugs is 'trouble' instead of suffering from a disease. We have to look at addiction as a health issue -- that those suffering from addiction need help."

The Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative is a project of Community Advocates, Inc. and is sponsored by a grant from the Open Society Institute, Baltimore, with additional funding from the Helen Bader Foundation, the Zilber Family Foundation and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

This [news release](http://www.ca-mati.org) is available online at www.ca-mati.org.

FREE Advocacy Workshop, Wednesday, Sept. 9, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

SPACE IS LIMITED -- REGISTER BY FRIDAY, SEPT. 4!

Attention recovery advocates -- learn how to influence the way that addiction treatment is funded and delivered.

The workshop will be presented by [Florence "Flo" Hilliard](#), national lecturer on the neurobiology of abuse, addiction and behavior; and attorney Genyne Edwards, Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI) advocacy consultant.



**Download a
Flyer and
Brochure
(en Espanol)**

Topics include:

- The advancing science of addiction and recovery
- Practice sessions to develop advocacy skills
- How to influence policy decisions

Attendees will learn:

- Recent developments in the science of addiction and recovery
- The addiction treatment gap in Milwaukee
- The foundations of public policy

- Skills to more effectively advocate to policy makers
- How to help more people find a path to recovery

The workshop is for anyone concerned about the social and personal costs of not treating addiction as a disease, including:

- Advocates
- MATI members and / or their invited guests
- Addiction treatment providers
- Allies of people in recovery, including professionals, friends, family and volunteers who work with people in treatment
- Men and women with two or more years of recovery who are interested in becoming advocates.

The Advocacy Workshop will be Wednesday, Sept. 9, 8:30-11:30 a.m. at the Summit Building, [6737 W. Washington St. \(70th and Greenfield\)](#).

The workshop is FREE, but space is limited and registration is required. Register by Friday, Sept. 4 by contacting Hilary Chavez, MATI Program Coordinator, at (414) 270-2950 or hilaryc@communityadvocates.net.

For more information visit [MATI's Web site](#) or contact Genyne Edwards, MATI Advocacy Consultant, at (414) 270-2952 or ingenuity@gmail.com.

As events unfold in the political arena, advocates will be able to take advantage of situations in a strategic way. The MATI team will keep advocates informed and abreast of opportunities to shape their messages. In this way we can work together, from different vantage points, but united in our pursuit of a rational system for the funding and delivery of addiction treatment.

The MATI advocacy strategy and the MATI workgroups will develop and implement action plans and activities that send a strong message to policy makers. Your involvement and your story are vital to the success of these messages. Opportunities include:

- Media messages
- MATI Milwaukee events
- Statewide "Making Parity Real" briefing sessions
- Testimony to legislators at budget hearings
- Letters and petitions
- Community events

The workshop is made possible by the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division-Wiser Choice Program. Thanks also to workshop sponsors Barbara Beckert, Disability Rights Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and John Hyatt, IMPACT.

The workshop room is wheelchair accessible. To request disability-related accommodations (e.g. an interpreter, large print materials) or language translation, please contact Hilary Chavez at (414) 270-2950 or email hilaryc@communityadvocates.net. We must receive your accommodation request at the time of registration or we may not be able to meet your request.

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, the Zilber Family Foundation and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Visit MATI online at www.ca-mati.org.

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