

Join PCS in Celebrating Recovery Month

By Kay Butler-Lueking, MC, LPC

The Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) has named **September as Recovery Month**. PCS recognizes and supports the mission to educate, support, and empower people affected by substance use disorders. This September of 2009 marks the celebration of the **20th anniversary of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month**. Among the milestones reached since Recovery Month began is the recent passage of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

The 5th annual **Art of Recovery Expo in Phoenix** will be held on Saturday, September 19th at the Phoenix Convention Center. For more information, visit: www.artofrecoveryexpo.com, or call 480-767-7880.

The theme of Recovery Month this year is “**Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal.**” The focus is on incorporating all available resources, both within our communities and on the internet, to educate and support those suffering from or impacted by addiction.

According to results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 23.2 million people aged 12 or older needed treatment for a substance use disorder in the US. Only 3.9 of those needing treatment actually received treatment in 2007.

The American Medical Association recognizes addiction as a disease. According to SAMHSA, like other chronic illnesses, addiction is a disease that can be recovered from. Treatment and recovery support services are as effective as treatments for other illnesses. Physical, mental, and spiritual recovery IS possible through holistic and diverse approaches.

Recovery Month emphasizes the fact that **people experience recovery in different ways**. Some individuals may require medical attention, detoxification, inpatient treatment, and individual and/or group therapy. Overall health will be a focus for most newly recovering people. Exploration of spirituality will often be an element of the recovery process. Most individuals will find it necessary to expand social networks and participate in recovery-based support groups. Finding self empowerment by helping others is also important for many who find successful recovery.

Recovery Month recognizes the **Internet as an important resource** for substance use disorders and recovery support. According to SAMHSA, studies show that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of all American adults use the Internet and 75% search for health information online. Over 70 different online recovery programs and services are being used by diverse ethnic and age groups within the US. SAMSHA offers a toll-free help line for information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day at 1-800-662-HELP.

Additional Online Treatment and Recovery Support offered by Recovery Month include:

- SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment: Web site: <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>
- The Sober Recovery Community – <http://www.soberrecovery.com/forums> (Offers support forums for people in recovery, as well as family and friends)
- Sober.com – <http://www.sober.com/forums/default.html> (Provides message boards for people in recovery and also provides recovery coaching from professional counselors)
- eGetGoing – <http://www.egetgoing.com> (Helps people new to recovery through online support groups led by certified counselors)
- Shouting Inside – <http://www.shoutinginside.com> (Helps young adults who misuse substances share their stories and struggles with like-minded people).

Recovery Month urges us to **help support the media in dispelling the most common misconceptions about addiction**. Addiction used to be viewed as a personal choice or character flaw. Today, most researchers view addiction as a brain disease since the brain appears to function differently under the influence of drugs and alcohol for those affected by addiction. Each drug changes how the brain functions in a specific way and these changes have a powerful influence on all aspects of a person's behavior. A person's drug use can go from voluntary to compulsive – making alcohol or drugs the greatest motivator in his or her existence.

Addictions range from alcohol and drug dependence/abuse, to eating disorders, gambling, and sex. As many of us know first hand, addiction affects not only the persons with addiction, but also their families and communities. Psychological Counseling Services, Ltd. (PCS) offers customized one to five week intensive programming to those whose lives have been affected by addiction. Our compassionate and personalized programming can serve as either follow up to inpatient, to determine need for a higher level of care, or as the treatment option for persons who are finding it difficult to maintain sobriety.

The devastating path of addiction finds its way into the lives of individuals, families and communities. Recovery Month is aimed at supporting the community by providing education and hope for everyone affected by addiction. For more information, visit www.recoverymonth.gov. Join Psychological Counseling Services, Ltd., in celebrating Recovery Month. Let's **make recovery an achievable option for everyone**.

