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New Report Finds Drug Treatment in Baltimore City and Maryland Associated With Lower Healthcare Costs

BALTIMORE, MD (March 15, 2007) – The Baltimore City Health Department and Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc. are releasing a study on the value of drug treatment to reduce healthcare costs in Maryland.

“This study underscores the need to protect and expand investments in drug treatment in the budget,” said Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon.

Researchers from the University of Maryland at Baltimore County compared the experiences of people who were addicted to heroin, divided into two groups according to whether they received treatment (most often with methadone). The study found:

- **Persons receiving drug treatment were four times less likely to be hospitalized.** In Baltimore City in 2005, 10% of the treated were hospitalized, compared to 40% of those untreated. Outside of the city, 11% of the treated were hospitalized, compared to 51% of the untreated.
- **Persons receiving drug treatment were substantially less likely to visit the Emergency Department.** In Baltimore City in 2005, 55% of the treated visited the Emergency Department, compared to 73% of those untreated. Outside of the city, 50% of the treated had Emergency Department visits, compared to 75% of the untreated.
- **For those persons admitted to the hospital or visiting the Emergency Department, those receiving drug treatment stayed less time.** For example, of those Baltimore City patients who were hospitalized, those in treatment stayed an average of 10 days over the course 2005. Those not in treatment were hospitalized an average of 18 days.
- **Persons receiving drug treatment consumed less than one-quarter of the health care resources of those not in drug treatment.** The researchers measured use of health care resources for patients in the Medicaid fee-for-service system. In Baltimore City, individuals in treatment accounted for an average of \$2,755 in Medicaid fee-for-service

charges. Untreated individuals cost an average of \$11,286. Outside of Baltimore city, treated individuals cost an average of \$2,155, while untreated cost an average of \$13,178.

“Drug treatment works not only for patients, but also for the bottom line,” said Adam Brickner, President of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc. “Untreated addiction to heroin and other similar drugs costs us all.”

The study was conducted by the Center for Health Program Development and Management of the University of Maryland at Baltimore County using Maryland’s Medicaid data from 2003 to 2005.

The Baltimore City Health Department commissioned the study, with funding provided by the Anne E. Casey Foundation and permission from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The study report is available at www.baltimorehealth.org.

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