

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hamilton County's Number One Health Problem Losing Funding
Budget Cuts Hit Valuable Drug Treatment Services

CINCINNATI -- (August 7, 2001) This year's budget for the Hamilton County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board reflects a 7 percent cut to treatment services from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS). While ODADAS experienced a 13 percent budget cut overall, the department absorbed most of the reduction internally to cut services statewide by 5 percent. In addition, the Hamilton County Drug Court was cut by \$90,000, which is a 6 percent cut in its allocation from the county.

The Hamilton County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ADAS) Board recently awarded this year's contracts, which reflect the budget cut, to provide alcohol and other drug addiction treatment and prevention services for the citizens of Hamilton County. The ADAS Board awarded \$16.2 million in contracts to 17 local agencies.

In Hamilton County, the HIV Early Prevention and Intervention Program managed by the Central Community Health Board received a 40% cut. And, Treatment Capacity Expansion, which provides treatment for adolescents, will be hit with a 55 percent cut, reducing the number of adolescent treatment providers receiving funds.

"We have received some new dollars, which is helping to counteract the state cuts; however, we need all funding sources at maximum levels to provide the full system of services needed in Hamilton County," said Dr. Sherry Knapp, CEO of the Hamilton County ADAS Board. "Unfortunately, these cuts will reduce treatment options and cause an increase in the length of waiting lists for alcohol and drug treatment," she added.

These losses come at a time when substance abuse has been named the nation's number one health problem affecting all segments of society with staggering costs to the economy. Alcohol and other drug abuse costs Hamilton County millions of dollars in health and other related costs, lost productivity and criminal justice costs.

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"As the market leader for publicly-funded alcohol and drug services, the Hamilton County ADAS Board is continuously evaluating our services to show that treatment works and more importantly, to further dramatize the positive impact of alcohol and drug recovery on this community's overall health status," said Nina Lewis, coordinator of quality improvement at the Hamilton County ADAS Board.

To better understand the economic impact of substance abuse treatment in Hamilton County, the ADAS Board in collaboration with ODADAS, conducted a cost-effectiveness study. Data published on a sample of Hamilton County clients who were interviewed one year following discharge from treatment revealed:

- 47% reduction in criminal arrests
- 77% reduction in jail time
- 92% decrease in DUI arrests
- 40% decrease in automobile crashes
- Absenteeism rates were reduced from 22% to 5% after treatment
- 40% decrease in on-the-job accidents

An additional analysis of 700 graduates from the Hamilton County Drug Court treatment program, which began in 1995, shows an 11 percent recidivism rate three years following treatment. The nationally quoted comparison is a 45 percent recidivism rate for similar felony offenders not participating in drug court treatment.

One of the most striking improvements in the comparison of potential cost savings before and after treatment is the change in criminal arrest rates. "Clearly, abstinence for addicts is highly associated with lowered risk for arrests, which saves the county millions in criminal justice costs," said Francine Lopomo, director of program operations at the ADAS Board.

While youth prevention programs received a smaller cut in funding, the ADAS Board has identified the need to increase prevention services as a top priority. Adolescents are starting to use alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs at increasingly younger ages and more prevention will eventually reduce treatment needs.

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"Chip Eberle, president of Eberle Foods in Millvale, was pleased to discover that none of his property had been damaged during the Cincinnati riots," said Al Brown, director of the Mallory Center for Community Development in Millvale, one of the prevention programs funded by the ADAS Board.

"The Mallory Center provides a place for the kids to go to build relationships, which increase accountability and a sense of responsibility," said Mr. Eberle. "By building relationships for the kids, Al and others have enhanced the young people's connection to their community and increased their concern for others."

The Hamilton County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board plans, funds and evaluates public alcohol and drug treatment, prevention and education services for the citizens of Hamilton County. The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners established it as a separate alcohol and drug addiction services board in 1989, following the passage of House Bill 317.

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HUMAN INTEREST STORY IDEAS

Programs funded by the Hamilton County ADAS Board

Addict waits five months for treatment

Jim Serger had a family, a good job and was by all societal standards a success, until alcoholism and depression took control of his life. Following a suicide attempt and loss of everything of value -- his family, friends and reputation, Jim landed at the Mt. Airy Shelter for homeless men. He attended regular A.A. meetings and realized he needed intensive treatment before re-entering the workplace. **The Prospect House** was the answer with its intensive program and high success rate. Jim spent five months on the waiting list and was fortunate to get a placement where a solid framework for sobriety has been laid out for him. Many addicts relapse while waiting for residential treatment. Fortunately, Jim was successful and currently resides at Prospect House.

To interview Jim Serger, call the Prospect House at 921-1613.

Local business owner credits prevention program

Walter Eberle, president of Eberle Foods in Millvale, was pleased to discover that none of his property had been damaged during the Cincinnati riots. In fact, Millvale did not have one incident that could be related to the riot activity. Mr. Eberle firmly believes that the work of the **Mallory Center for Community Development** and other programs make a difference by providing opportunity to build relationships and accountability, which enhance the community by increasing a sense of responsibility. The Mallory Center works with neighborhood youth and provides prevention programming for children with parents who are substance abusers. Local police officers have also commented about the positive effect the program has on local youth. **To interview Walter (Chip) Eberle, call Eberle Foods at 542-7200.**

Addict seeks treatment to save her children

"Jean" has a total of eight children. One by one, the first five were taken from her, because of her addiction to alcohol and other drugs. She did not want to lose her last three children. She felt tired and desperate -- she had finally hit bottom. Jean and her young children, two boys and a girl, came to **First Step Home** last November. Jean spent nearly six months in treatment and is in recovery. Today, Jean is living in transitional housing and looking for employment. Her children are with her and she has the opportunity to do things like read to them and care for them herself. She would have lost her children, if it weren't for First Step Home.

To interview "Jean," contact Ginger Bock at First Step Home at 961-4663.

Youth chooses drug-free living

Brad Collins joined Teen Institute at Seton High School three years ago and found the strength to abstain from using drugs through friendships with peers. Teen Institute not only helped Brad be drug-free, it also helped him understand other common teen issues, such as anger, stress, sadness and diversity. Teen Institute brings many unique individuals together to learn from each other and join in the fight against drugs. **To interview Brad Collins, contact Liz Hiles at the Alcoholism Council at 281-7880, ext. #110.**

Adolescent treatment turns lives around

An adolescent client at **Alternatives (a Talbert House program)** had dropped out of school before entering the program. He later fulfilled his GED and is now in his second year at the University of Cincinnati. While in the program, he wrote a poem titled "Once a Boy," which is now on the wall at Alternatives. He represents a number of adolescent clients who achieve recovery through treatment. **NORCEN's Adolescent Recovery Program** offers a variety of treatment levels on an outpatient basis, meeting after school and on weekends to accommodate a youth's school schedule. **To interview an adolescent client, contact Katie McGuire at Talbert House at 872-5863 ext. #228 or Joan Wyler at NORCEN at 761-6222, ext. #104.**

