

Maximizing Outreach Through Town Halls

A Planning Guide



INTRODUCTION

***Maximizing Outreach Through Town Halls: A Planning Guide* offers you step-by-step instructions for planning an effective town hall meeting, tips on how to promote your meeting and guidelines for using HBO's program "ADDICTION" to mobilize and organize support for new attitudes and policies about addiction prevention, treatment and recovery in your community.**

HBO, in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), has produced a multi-platform campaign to educate Americans about advancements in the understanding of drug and alcohol addiction and its treatment as a brain disease. Their campaign is built around a 90-minute HBO documentary entitled "ADDICTION" that is scheduled to premier on March 15, 2007.

This planning guide is one part of a project organized in conjunction with HBO's program. *Addiction: Communities Take Action* is a project of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), Faces & Voices of Recovery and Join Together with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In communities across the country, citizens are coming together through town hall meetings, house parties, media outreach and special briefings to key policymakers to build a response to addiction. This project runs through September 2007, National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (www.recoverymonth.gov). You can use this guide to plan events leading up to March 15th and through Recovery Month. There's more information about *Addiction: Communities Take Action* at www.addictionaction.org.

For years, substance abuse prevention experts and community organizations have held town hall meetings to inform citizens about emerging alcohol or drug problems, build support for an anti-drug effort, gauge where a community stands on an issue, or to find and implement a solution to a problem. CADCA developed this planning guide to help you raise the profile of addiction and recovery issues facing your community.

Town hall meetings can be a great way to get a message across to the public, by generating news media coverage and raising awareness of national and local prevention, treatment and recovery strategies. When you hold a town hall meeting, you will be able to jump start your local advocacy efforts, raise awareness about addiction and recovery, and promote new attitudes and policies.

PLANNING A TOWN HALL MEETING

To help you get started on planning your town hall, we've outlined some basic key steps and considerations. As with any major event you plan, keep in mind that you will need to identify a way to evaluate the process and outcome of your event. For tips on evaluation, see CADCA's Strategizer 48, *Guiding Principles for Coalition Evaluation*, at www.cadca.org.

Step 1: Form a Planning Committee

A good way to maximize the impact of your event on people in your community is to form partnerships to plan it and carry it out. These relationships will raise the profile of the event and increase public awareness and attention. Your partners will also be able to help you establish the event's credibility, secure free services such as audio visual equipment, space or refreshments. All planning partners and supporters should be publicly recognized as sponsors of the event. Some possible partners include your local or state agency responsible for alcohol and drug services, your state's member of the National Prevention Network (NPN), recovery community organizations, treatment and recovery centers, Drug Courts, educators and faith-based institutions. It is helpful to recruit your planning committee as early as possible. They will help plan, manage and promote the event. Sometimes, more than one committee or subcommittees may be appropriate, such as a logistics committee or media committee.

Step 2: Understand the Unique Characteristics of Your Community

Before organizing your town hall, you must first have a strong understanding of your community's unique issues and challenges. Review local data from a variety of sources and develop a community profile based on solid research. This information will help you know how to focus the discussion and give your presentation credibility. For example, it is important to understand the demographics, distinct culture, governing structure, alcohol and drug problems, opportunities for treatment and recovery services and barriers to help in your community.

Step 3: Identify Objectives

No two town hall meetings are alike. Your meeting's content, format and objectives will depend on its particular concerns and needs. For example, your objective could be simply to inform families and residents about the problem of addiction and the need for treatment and recovery services and to build excitement for the HBO film. Other communities may want their town hall meeting to be a forum for a call to action, such as new policies or increased community collaboration.

Step 4: Determine Format

Your format will depend on what you are trying to achieve. One of the most common formats is a briefing with a three- or four-person panel of experts and a moderator. The panel discussion typically lasts from 35-50 minutes and the Q&A lasts no more than 30 minutes. The public and policymakers are the primary audience for this type of town hall.

Another format is a media roundtable. Two to four panelists who bring different viewpoints to the issue that you have decided to feature. They have a moderated discussion designed to highlight the issue and then take questions from reporters. Reporters are the primary audience for a media roundtable. They can be held in a small setting such as an office conference room or a classroom.

A third format is a policy panel. At a policy panel, the public presents their opinions. The panel members are community leaders, who receive testimony from residents. Speakers give their accounts and urge the panelists to adopt certain measures or recommendations. For this format, the policy panel can convene after the meeting and issue its findings or recommendations based on what they have learned from the public.

The screenshot shows the website for AddictionAction.org. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Sign Up', 'Tell a Friend', 'HBO.com', and 'Contact'. The main header features the title 'Addiction' in large white letters, with the tagline 'communities take action' below it. A background image shows a diverse group of people. On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: 'Watch the Show', 'House Parties', 'Community Events', 'Help and Recovery', and 'About Us'. Below the menu, there is a section for 'HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS' featuring 'Prevention, Treatment & Recovery Outreach Partners' with logos for 'JOIN TOGETHER' and 'CADCA'. At the bottom of the menu area, there is a logo for 'FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY'. The main content area on the right is titled 'HELP AND RECOVERY' and contains several paragraphs of placeholder text (Lorem ipsum). There is a small portrait photo of a woman and a 'Subtitle Text' section. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: 'Copyright Join Together 2007 - All Rights Reserved' and a footer: 'Join Together, Address Here, Email, Phone'.

Visit www.AddictionAction.org for tips and planning guides on how to get involved in HBO's ADDICTION project.

THE LOGISTICS OF YOUR MEETING

Step 1: Selecting the Place and Date

Finding the appropriate location is an important step in the planning process and should be determined as early as possible. In some cases, the location can help set the tone for your meeting. It's important to select a place that is easy to access for residents and local media. Some ideas are children's hospitals, community centers, universities and colleges, public libraries or National Guard armories. The event date and time is equally important and may depend on your venue's availability. When selecting a date, scout community calendars to avoid competing community events. If you need to know how many people will be coming, set up a way for people to RSVP. As long as you are able to get a satisfactory number of RSVPs the event should not be rescheduled.

Step 2: Identify and Invite Panelists

Trusted, well-respected experts are key to your briefing. They can be a draw for attendance and media coverage. But it's also important to include a local angle on your panel and people in long-term recovery who can tell their stories of hope. When you're putting together your panel, think about the issue that you'd like to address and what you want to get out of your event. The most interesting panels usually feature experts with a broad range of experience, such as academic researchers, state NPN representatives, individuals with clinical backgrounds, treatment providers or counselors, or prevention specialists. In addition, include individuals in your community who have experience with long-term recovery. A good mix for a panel would be a medical expert, preferably an M.D., a law enforcement official who is interested in ending the revolving door of people with addiction, a family member who hasn't been able to get help for their child, and a person who has been in recovery from addiction for at least two years. Working with the public relations department of a local university, hospital or medical center is the best option for securing a medical expert. You can contact Addiction: Communities Take Action's web site for other ideas for people to contact. Invite panelists by first speaking with them and then follow up with formal printed invitations sent by mail or simple letters mailed, e-mailed and/or faxed.

Who to Invite?

Some of the people who would benefit most from attending your briefing are key civic and political leaders, treatment and recovery community leaders, parents, educators, school administrators, law enforcement officials and public health officials. It is also important to have a youth component in your audience. For example, it might be helpful to identify school-based youth organizations and invite youth leaders who can help get the word out about your event.

Step 3: Identify a Moderator or Facilitator

The facilitator or moderator you select should be a well-respected community figure, such as a local prevention expert, a reporter, or a high-level city official. This person will be responsible for facilitating

the panel discussion and fielding audience questions to panelists. Consider a moderator who is adept at collaboration and is not a polarizing figure.

Step 4: Prepare Panelists and Media Spokespeople

You'll want to make your panelists comfortable with their colleagues and with their role.

- Give them background information on the event—in writing—as soon as you have confirmed their participation.
- Schedule an informal prep session with the panel about 60 minutes prior to the event.
- For all speakers, but especially teens, determine whether or not they and/or their parents are comfortable with their real name being released to the media, and if they would like to be photographed or filmed.
- If you are recruiting teens who are in recovery, they should have at least two years of clean and sober time and have had experience speaking publicly about their recovery.

It is also important to identify individuals who will serve as media spokespeople to provide comment for the press. These individuals could, include local officials who can discuss the nature and the extent of addiction problems in your community, people in long-term recovery in your community and citizens who can talk about the next steps that you will be taking as a result of your event.

Step 5: Staff Your Event

A key step in the planning of your briefing is to identify individuals to help execute your briefing on-site. Someone should be assigned to handle requests from the media, to greet and seat members of the audience and panelists, to distribute materials, to record comments and questions from the audience, to manage equipment set-up or to handle any other important logistical matters.

Step 6: Prepare Materials to Distribute On-Site

HBO and its partnering organizations, including CADCA, Join Together and Faces & Voices of Recovery, have developed various materials to help you support your *Addiction: Communities Take Action* campaign efforts. These materials are available at www.addictionaction.org

You should also use the information that you researched to develop targeted localized materials that make the issue relevant for citizens of your community.

PROMOTING A TOWN HALL MEETING

Step 1: Getting the Media There

To get reporters and editors to attend your meeting, it's not enough to simply invite them; you must let them know why the event will make a good story.

The first step is creating a targeted media list. The goal is to identify reporters who cover beats such as health or medical issues, substance use disorders, parenting and family or teens. Those who have reported on addiction and alcohol and drug problems or covered other events hosted by your organization should be at the top of your list. *Bacon's Media Source* (www.bacons.com), *Burrelle's Media Directories* (www.burelles.com) and the *News Media Yellow Book* (leadershipdirectories.com) are all good sources for print, television and radio media contacts. These are paid services. You can also call your local media outlets to identify the proper reporters to cover your event. Another way to identify friendly reporters is to keep track of who's writing articles or covering stories about your issues. The next step is to send an email media advisory to reporters on your targeted media list at least one week in advance of your event. Don't forget to ask to have your event listed on their "daybooks," where all events that will be happening on a particular day are posted. The advisory should emphasize speakers and should be followed up with phone calls to reporters that you've identified. When you talk to reporters, stress the newsworthiness of your event, the local angle, the HBO show and the science behind the story. See the "The Major Themes of HBO's Addiction" section on page 12 for tips on how to create local hooks based on the dominant themes of HBO's documentary.

Step 2: Other Ways to Promote Your Event

Another effective way to promote your town hall is to enlist the support of relevant community organizations. Your outreach efforts combined with theirs can help increase publicity for the event. Once you've figured out your target audience there are different strategies for inviting them to attend. If your target audience is community stakeholders, business leaders and parents, issue personal invitations and advertise through PTA meetings or other outlets. If your audience is the general public, then add your briefing to the event calendar in your local newspaper by contacting the calendar editors at your publication. Another cost-effective way to promote your briefing is by posting flyers or posters throughout the community, in places such as community and treatment centers, coffee shops, grocery stores, faith-based institutions, public libraries or hospitals.

Step 3: Create Press Kits

You will need to have materials to hand out to reporters who attend your meeting. The easiest way to disseminate materials is through a press kit. The press kit should include the media advisory and/or news release, a fact sheet with local statistics about addiction and recovery, brief biographies of speakers as well as copies of any reports or case studies. In addition to the materials available at www.AddictionAction.org, several federal agencies offer local, state and national data on addiction and recovery, such as:

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) www.samhsa.gov
- SAMHSA's online state profiles www.oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm
- NIDA's Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG), which tracks current and emerging drug abuse trends for 21 major U.S. metropolitan areas. www.drugabuse.gov/about/organization/CEWG/CEWGHome.html
- The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), which offers free collateral materials, including the brochure "Wake Up to the Risks of Marijuana: A Guide for Parents" (number PHD956) and "Keeping Your Kids Drug-Free: A How-to Guide for Parents and Caregivers" (number PHD884). Contact NCADI at 1-800-788-2800 to order. Materials also available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. www.health.org
- Your state's SAMHSA/CSAP's Regional Alcohol and Drug Awareness Resource (RADAR) Network resource center. Call 1-800-729-6686 to obtain contact information.
- Recovery Month Web site www.recoverymonth.gov

FAST FACTS ON ADDICTION

One in four Americans has a family member who is struggling with addiction.

Addiction affects **22.2 million Americans**, yet only 9 percent receive the treatment they need.

Over 80 percent of people with substance use disorders started using before age 18.

HOLDING YOUR TOWN HALL

Step 1: Setting-Up Your Meeting

To ensure a successful event, assign volunteers and staff to different tasks.

- **Room set up:** Some people should arrive early to make sure the room is set up properly and make any last-minute adjustments. Make sure any tables, chairs, podiums, equipment or visual displays are set up properly. For large briefings, it will be useful to have a sound system, including table microphones for the panelists, as well as a stage or elevated panel table in the front of the room. Television and radio reporters will also appreciate having a mult box available if there is more than one microphone being used by panelists. A mult box provides a place for reporters to plug their equipment and get a direct feed of all the audio through the sound mixing board. Small media briefings, with 25 or fewer attendees, work well with a roundtable setup, with panelists on one side of the table and attendees around the remainder of the table. Extra chairs can circle the perimeter of the room to accommodate additional guests.
- **Sign-in table:** You will need to set up a sign-in table, where you can collect names and contact information for everybody who comes.
- **Sign-in sheets:** Remember to have separate sign-in sheets for the general audience and members of the media. This information will be invaluable as you conduct your follow up and plan future meetings.
- **Hand-outs:** At the sign-in table, you may want to have agendas and community kits available for people who come, as well as press kits for reporters.
- **Sign-up for future mailings and information:** Your briefing can also serve as an opportunity to collect subscribers for your organization's newsletter or listserv.

Step 2: Conducting Your Meeting

The briefing should begin with a welcome and introduction by the head or spokesperson of the host organization or planning committee. The welcome and introduction should last no more than five minutes and should explain the purpose of the meeting, welcome guests and introduce the moderator. The moderator should then begin the panel discussion with a brief introduction of the issues that will be discussed, a review of the format, and introductions of each panelist. After the presentations, the moderator should be judicious when asking panelists questions. It usually works best to allow all of the panelists to speak and then each should have three minutes to answer a question from the moderator. The entire panel discussion shouldn't last longer than 50 minutes. After the panel discussion, the moderator begins the Q&A. The moderator should take questions from the audience and field them to the appropriate panelist. Depending on the size of the audience, it may be helpful to set up a microphone in the center of the room or to walk over to audience members and allow them to speak into the microphones. Leave time to wrap up the session, summarize major points, discuss next steps and thank guests. The Q&A should last about 30 minutes.

Step 3: Facilitate Media Interviews

Leave enough time after the completion of your briefing for media interviews. Generally, you should set aside 30 minutes after the Q&A ends to facilitate the interviews between members of the media and your spokespeople. In many cases, media will request an advance interview, so make sure someone at your organization is available weeks in advance to handle media interviews. Visit <http://cadca.org/CoalitionResources/media.asp> for tips on how to talk to the media.

SAMPLE MEDIA ALERT

MEDIA ALERT

LOCAL EXPERTS CONVENE TO EXPLORE AND DEMYSTIFY DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Attendees Will Preview and Discuss Groundbreaking New
HBO Documentary, "Addiction," at _____ (DATE) _____ Town Hall Meeting

WHAT: _____ (COALITION NAME) is hosting a **town hall meeting and special preview of the groundbreaking new HBO documentary entitled "ADDICTION."** Following the screening, a panel of community advocates and experts will explore addiction, discuss obstacles to recovery and treatment, and offer solutions. Community advocates, parents, political leaders and concerned individuals are joining forces to bring addiction issues to the forefront.

Confirmed panelists include:

- (NAME, TITLE, ORG)
- (NAME, TITLE, ORG)
- (NAME, TITLE, ORG)

WHY: One in four Americans has a family member who is struggling with addiction. Over 80 percent of people with substance abuse or dependence disorder started using before age 18. Currently, addiction affects 22.2 million Americans. Yet only nine percent are receiving the treatment they need. In partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), HBO is launching the ADDICTION project, an unprecedented multi-media campaign aimed at helping Americans understand addiction as a treatable brain disease, as well as spotlighting new medical advancements. Through the town hall and other local events, organizations in _____ (CITY) are bringing the themes of HBO's eye-opening "ADDICTION" documentary to life in this region. To learn more about the campaign, visit www.AddictionAction.org.

WHEN: (DATE AND TIME)

WHERE: (ADDRESS)

PRESS CONTACT: To arrange pre- or post-event **interviews with panelists** and other spokespeople, please contact: (NAME, CELL AND EMAIL)

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A **media alert** is an invitation for press to attend and cover an upcoming event. It should be distributed to media (i.e., TV, radio, newspapers and magazines) a minimum of three days before a scheduled event via e-mail and/or fax and followed up with phone calls.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Your efforts do not end with the town hall. In most cases a town hall meeting serves as a catalyst for future strategies and initiatives. To truly achieve your goal, you will need to conduct a number of follow-up steps beginning no more than two weeks after the event:

Step 1: Conduct a Debrief

No more than two weeks after your briefing, convene key individuals involved in planning your event to discuss how it went. Talk about whether you achieved your goals how you want to put what took place into practice in the community. It is also a good idea to obtain feedback from the panelists.

Step 2: Prepare Report and Action Plan

After the debrief, write up the comments from the panel discussion and the Q&A, giving an overview of the briefing and summarizing the problems and solutions offered by the community and panelists. Think about what the next steps could be and develop an action plan. Some possible ideas are policy recommendations, information dissemination or media outreach. Your report should also include clippings of any coverage your event received in newspapers, as well as scripts from any radio or TV coverage.

Step 3: Using Town Hall Meetings as a Resource Pool

One of the most useful resources that you can develop from your briefing is a database of all meeting attendees. This database can become your mailing list for future events and a source of potential funders and volunteers. The database can also serve as a resource to identify members of the community to appear before city councils or legislative hearings.

SAMPLE TOWN HALL AGENDA

EXAMPLE: **Addiction:** _____ **Takes Action**
(EVENT TITLE)
(YOUR CITY)

(LOCATION)

(DATE)

(TIME)

Sponsored by:

_____ invites you to a special preview of the
(YOUR COALITION OR LOCAL GROUP)
new HBO documentary, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A.

Introductions (5-10 minutes)

Local coalition leader welcomes everyone, tells everyone what they can expect from the event, and recognizes special guests.

Excerpt from HBO's Addiction (20-30 minutes)

Panel Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Moderator: Local coalition leader or a seasoned local media partner

Panelists:

Youth or Adult in Recovery

Topic: Putting a face on addiction and recovery—a story of hope

Recovery Advocate

Topic: Removing barriers and discrimination for people with substance-use disorders

Medical Professional, Memorial Hospital

Topic: What really happens in the ER on a Saturday night in (YOUR CITY)

Treatment Provider

Topic: Navigating the system to find quality treatment options in (YOUR CITY)

Your State representative, state alcohol and drug abuse director, local mayor or other political leader

Topic: The (CITY) State strategy for supporting addiction treatment and recovery.

Q and A (10-20 minutes)

NOTE:

Your community will determine who would be best to speak and what topics you wish to discuss, keeping in mind the longer-term outcomes you hope to achieve from bringing all these people together. Try not to have more than 4 or 5 persons on a panel. With that in mind, here are some other potential panelists and topics:

■ Faith Leader

Topic: The positive role the faith community can play to improve the environment for recovery;

■ Addiction Medicine Specialist

Topic: The new frontier of medications for alcoholism and drug addiction;

■ Business Leader

Topic: Why I have a drug-free workplace; The Value of an EAP program

THE MAJOR THEMES OF HBO'S "ADDICTION"

Taking Action in Your Community

HBO's show "ADDICTION" has six themes that you can use to broaden understanding of addiction prevention, treatment and recovery in your community. As you plan local events, think about opportunities to use these themes at town hall meetings, house parties and other activities. At the national level, the theme of insurance discrimination is on the agenda in Congress, giving an opportunity to tie in your local events with a national effort.

THEME NO. 1:

The Trauma of Addiction, as Seen in our Nation's Emergency Rooms

The devastation of addiction is seen in trauma centers and emergency rooms across our country every day. Doctors and nurses see first hand the too frequent deadly effects of untreated addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Reviewing data from emergency departments is one way that the extent of substance-use disorders is measured in the US. The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) is a system for monitoring drug-related hospital emergency department visits and drug-related deaths.

You can review the DAWN data (www.dawninfo.samhsa.gov) to see national trends. To find out about the situation in your own community, call your local hospitals and ask them about a typical night in the ER. Find out if they collect information about how many people are admitted each day and how many admissions are related to alcohol and drug use or addiction. Find out if they have programs for patients to get help with their alcohol or drug problems at the ER.

Ask your local ER doctors to join you in your local advocacy work to make the community safer and healthier. You can also enlist the support of your local medical community in your activities and events, letting them know of your shared goals of reducing trauma admissions at your local ER and improving the health of people in your community.

THEME NO. 2:

Youth: Addiction, Treatment and Recovery

Alcohol and drug use usually begins in adolescence when the brain is still undergoing dramatic changes in structure and function. That is why early prevention is so important and why the younger a child starts using alcohol or drugs, the greater the chances are for addiction in the future. For parents, finding the right treatment and recovery support for their kids can be very challenging.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Learn what prevention, treatment and recovery support is available for young people in your community. Are there student assistance programs in your schools? Are there family support groups such as Al-Anon, Nar-Anon or other opportunities for families to come together in your community? Are there families with children with at least two years in recovery in your community who would be willing to speak out about their experiences? Are there families who haven't been able to get the help they need who can talk about the barriers that they've faced? Are there alcohol and drug-free recreational activities for young people in your community? Are there pediatricians who do screenings and brief interventions for their patients? Is there a recovery high school in your community? Find out by contacting the Association of Recovery Schools (www.recoveryschools.org). You can use this information to develop an action agenda to expand the opportunities for recovery to young people in your community.

THEME NO. 3:

Understanding the Science of Addiction and Recovery

Over the last 15 years, scientific advances have revolutionized the understanding of neurobiological underpinnings of why some people suffer from addiction to alcohol and drugs while others do not. Using brain imaging, researchers can observe the neurochemical changes in the brain as it responds to alcohol, drugs and medications for addiction treatment. This research helps explain why people with addiction find it so difficult to stop using alcohol and drugs and why treatment medications are effective.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (www.nida.nih.gov), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (www.niaaa.nih.gov) and the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (www.ncadi.samhsa.gov) have information on the latest breakthroughs in understanding the science of addiction and recovery.

THE MAJOR THEMES OF HBO's "ADDICTION"

Enlist local members of the medical community to speak about addiction as a brain disease. Encourage your schools to devote time to teach the basics of the science of addiction. Take NIDA's science into the classroom as a prevention technique through its "NIDA Goes Back to School" curricula.

THEME NO. 4: **New Treatments for Addiction**

Millions of Americans have used mutual support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) to get and stay clean and sober. A new generation of medications has been developed in the last decade that can help effectively treat addiction, especially when coupled with counseling and other recovery support. There are already several FDA-approved medications available to treat alcohol and drug dependence, including buprenorphine, naltrexone, methadone, and acamprosate. These new, effective treatments are an important addition to the arsenal of treatments that are helping people achieve long-term recovery.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Find out if medications for addiction are available in your community. Talk to local clinics, treatment centers and physicians to see whether they are prescribing medications for addiction treatment and recovery. You can find out more by going to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (www.asam.org) to identify physicians in your area who could talk about these new medications. You can also use the online Buprenorphine Physician Locator (www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov) to find physicians in your area who are licensed to prescribe this new medication. Contact recovery community organizations (www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org) and find people who are in long-term recovery using medications to talk about how effective they have been for them.

THEME NO. 5: **Employee Assistance Programs**

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) grew out of the Occupational Alcohol Programs in the 1940s. EAPs provide professional counselors who do confidential assessments and short-term counseling to employees and their families who are dealing with addiction. Many businesses include opportunities for help with other issues as well, recognizing that everyday life stresses as well as addiction can negatively affect employee attendance and concentration, the general workplace morale, and an employee's ability to perform well on the job.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Poll major employers in your community to find out if they offer an Employee Assistance Program. What are the policies of major employers about alcohol and drug use? Do they have early

identification and referrals to treatment or are those found to be using alcohol and drugs dismissed from their jobs? Are there recovery plans that allow workers newly in recovery to come back to work in a supportive environment? Do members of your coalition or other groups promote work environments that are supportive of treatment? The U.S. Department of Labor's Working Partners website (www.dol.gov/workingpartners) includes a free drug-free workplace program builder that businesses in your community can use.

THEME NO. 6: **Insurance Discrimination**

Our nation is in dire need of a healthcare system that fully addresses the medical needs of and social supports for people struggling with addiction. Insurance companies typically impose higher co-payments, deductibles and more restrictive visit limits for mental health and addiction coverage than they do for physical healthcare. And some insurance companies don't cover substance use disorders and addiction treatment at all.

There is strong public support for ending insurance discrimination and covering addiction on a par with other health conditions. In January 2007, Mental Health America and the National Alliance on Mental Illness released a national survey that found that 74% of Americans support addiction parity.

To build public understanding of the effects of insurance discrimination and build support for equitable insurance coverage in the private insurance market, Reps. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and Jim Ramstad (R-MN) co-chairs of the Congressional Addiction Treatment and Recovery Caucus, are hosting a series of public hearings across the nation on the need for new national policies.

How to bring this story to life in your own community:

Research insurance coverage policy in your state. Talk to people in your community seeking addiction treatment about their experiences and document examples of insurance discrimination. Faces & Voices of Recovery's Insurance Equity Campaign (www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org) includes an information-gathering tool you can use.

Join with allied individuals and organizations to take action by engaging in state-wide and national advocacy efforts. You can use the recommendations in Join Together's "Blueprint for the States" (www.jointogether.org/blueprint) and "Ending Discrimination Against Individuals with Alcohol and Drug Problems" (www.jointogether.org/discrimination-report). Invite local lawmakers and individuals impacted by insurance limitations to speak at your events. Stay on top of the national discussion about this issue by visiting www.addictionaction.org and the websites of Faces & Voices of Recovery, Join Together and CADCA.

WEB RESOURCES

Addiction: Communities Take Action

www.AddictionAction.org

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

www.rwjf.org

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

www.cadca.org

Faces & Voices of Recovery

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

CADCA

CADCA® (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) is the national membership organization representing coalitions working to make America's communities safe, healthy and drug-free. CADCA supports its members with technical assistance and training, public policy, communications and coalition-specific media strategies, conferences and events. CADCA networks with 5,000 community coalitions across the country, which work with multiple sectors of the community, including businesses, parents, media, law enforcement, schools, faith organizations, health providers, social service agencies and government, to develop anti-drug strategies. CADCA's National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute provides training, technical assistance, evaluation and research to help coalitions reduce substance abuse in their communities.

www.cadca.org

FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY

Faces & Voices is a national campaign founded by the recovery community in 2001. The organization is committed to mobilizing and organizing the millions of Americans in long-term recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, our families, friends and allies to change public perceptions of recovery, end discrimination and keep a focus on the fact that recovery works and is making life better for millions of Americans.

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

JOIN TOGETHER

Since 1991 Join Together, a program of the Boston University School of Public Health, has been the nation's leading provider of information, strategic planning assistance and leadership development for community-based efforts to advance effective alcohol and drug policy, prevention, and treatment; and has helped community leaders understand and use the most current scientifically valid prevention and treatment approaches.

www.jointogether.org