

January 29, 2008

Dr. Terry Cline
Administrator
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
1 Choke Cherry Rd.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dr. Westley Clark
Director
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
1 Choke Cherry Rd.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Administrator Cline and Dr. Clark:

We are writing to ask you to fully fund \$2.5 million in FY 2008 funding for a new round of Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) grants and the technical assistance contract for those grants; and to include full funding for grants and technical assistance for this critical program in the President's FY 2009 budget.

You have been outspoken supporters of the peer recovery support services that recovery community organizations are providing to people all across our country as integral to recovery-oriented systems of care. SAMHSA is taking the lead in dramatically improving opportunities for individuals to experience long-term recovery from a chronic condition by linking professional treatment with opportunities for peer and other recovery support services for people seeking recovery and individuals newly in recovery.

We believe that SAMHSA should fully fund the RCSP Program in 2008 and the technical assistance that has been critical to making these innovative, community-driven services available to people who need them. The RCSP is the only federal program that supports recovery community organizations delivering peer recovery support services. We know that these innovative services have proven to be effective and are making a real difference in families and communities across our country.

National Outcome Measures (NOMS) data indicate that the RCSP program providing peer-to-peer recovery support services helps to maintain abstinence, decreases involvement in crime and criminal justice, increases employment and return to the education system, and increases stability in housing. It doesn't make sense to interrupt this program, just as we are gathering critical data about what is working most successfully in communities. RCSP grantees are incubators for new ideas. The demand for these grants – over 140 applications for the most recent round of grants – indicates the level of interest and commitment to engaging citizens in making it possible for others to recover from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

Innovations like recovery community centers and telephone recovery support services were pioneered in the states of Connecticut and Vermont with support from the RCSP program. It would be a tragedy to call a halt to these innovations just as we are beginning to understand why they are successful and how they could be replicated in other communities and states.

We urge you to fully fund the RCSP program in FY 2008 and support an expansion of the program in FY 2009.

Sincerely,

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems George Washington University

Faces & Voices of Recovery

Legal Action Center

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA)

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)

State Associations of Addiction Services (SAAS)

Therapeutic Communities of America (TCA)

Contact: Pat Taylor, Executive Director, Faces & Voices of Recovery – 202.737.0690