



TACKLING DRUG ADDICTION INITIATIVE



OSI's support has helped to more than double the number of Baltimore residents—26,000 from 11,000—who receive addiction treatment annually.

The problem now: In recent years, public funding has stayed flat while treatment costs have risen. Despite the cost effectiveness of treatment, we're backsliding on the number of people treated.

The Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative aims to make drug addiction treatment available to people without adequate insurance. Treatment works. More people simply need it.

TACKLING DRUG ADDICTION

For too long, alcohol and drug addiction have devastated individuals, families and neighborhoods in Baltimore. In Baltimore, unlike many other cities, heroin has been a major problem. During the 1990s, the city's drug overdose rate tripled, and the economic costs of drug addiction in the city exceeded \$2.5 billion a year.

About one in 10 people needs treatment, but many either have no insurance or inadequate coverage. OSI has worked with the city's public drug addiction treatment system over the past ten years to make it one of the most accountable, innovative and effective municipal treatment systems in the country. The problem is that there simply aren't enough resources to treat everyone who needs help.

In 1998, the Open Society Institute-Baltimore began the Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative to increase the availability of high-quality drug addiction treatment for uninsured and underinsured people. Since then, Baltimore has become a healthier, safer, more productive city, but much more needs to be done.

HOW WE WORK DIFFERENTLY

OSI-Baltimore focuses its work exclusively on some of the biggest challenges facing the city—failing schools, untreated drug addiction and an over-reliance on incarceration.

OSI-Baltimore looks for the roots of the challenges facing our city—and, instead of turning our backs on big problems, we dig in. **We believe that systemic change is possible.**

We educate ourselves about the scope of the problem and its potential solutions. We scour the city, state and country for smart solutions—and, if they don't exist yet, we collaborate with city leaders and community members to create them.

We partner with public systems to create lasting change in policy and practice, to take successful initiatives to scale, and to re-allocate and expand public funding. We help nonprofit organizations and their members, clients and supporters to recognize new opportunities, respond to emerging trends or threats, and take the lead in areas where they have expertise. And we work with business and civic leaders to engage them in the salient issues facing our community—issues that are not intransigent, but that respond to well-designed initiatives and deserve our investment. Our Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative works with our Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program to provide a continuum of approaches to lower incarceration rates and support former prisoners, notably those who have addiction issues, to re-enter the community successfully.

We know that, in order to solve complex problems we must tackle issues on multiple levels, use data to check our progress and revise our strategies, and be persistent.

An example:

Through OSI and others' support, a major education and advocacy campaign in the late 1990's led to the doubling of treatment slots and the tripling of annual public funding for treatment. The number of people receiving addiction treatment in publicly funded programs more than doubled, from 11,000 in 1997 to 26,000 in 2003. With the influx of money, it was important to assure that funds were used appropriately and effectively. Through OSI funding and leadership, the Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems (BSAS) convenes a national Scientific Advisory Committee of experts to help the city build an accessible, responsive and high-quality drug addiction treatment system. OSI staff are active members of the BSAS board, working to improve the performance of treatment centers, educate the community and policymakers about the effectiveness of treatment, and advocate to close the "treatment gap" that adversely affects the health and stability of Baltimore's families, neighborhoods and workforce.

THE CHALLENGE

Until 2005, OSI-Baltimore was funded solely by its founder George Soros, whose contribution of more than \$60 million to the city is the single largest outside philanthropic investment in Baltimore's history for work to help its most vulnerable citizens. Because of this investment, OSI-Baltimore has been a significant contributor to Baltimore's recently highly acclaimed renaissance.

We now seek other investors to support our future work. Mr. Soros will match 1:2 all gifts up to \$20 million. With this new support, our goal is to ensure that a majority of those who request treatment can get it. Once the city reaches this critical "tipping point," Baltimore will experience the full public health benefits of treatment.

"When I was mayor of Baltimore, we significantly expanded drug addiction treatment because we knew that our community needed a public health approach to deal effectively with addiction. I was pleased that the Open Society Institute and local foundations stepped up to provide crucial resources to support the city's efforts. Much progress has been made since then but more needs to be done to make treatment available to all who need it."

- KURT SCHMOKE

Former mayor of Baltimore,
Current dean of Howard University School of Law



A SAD STIGMA



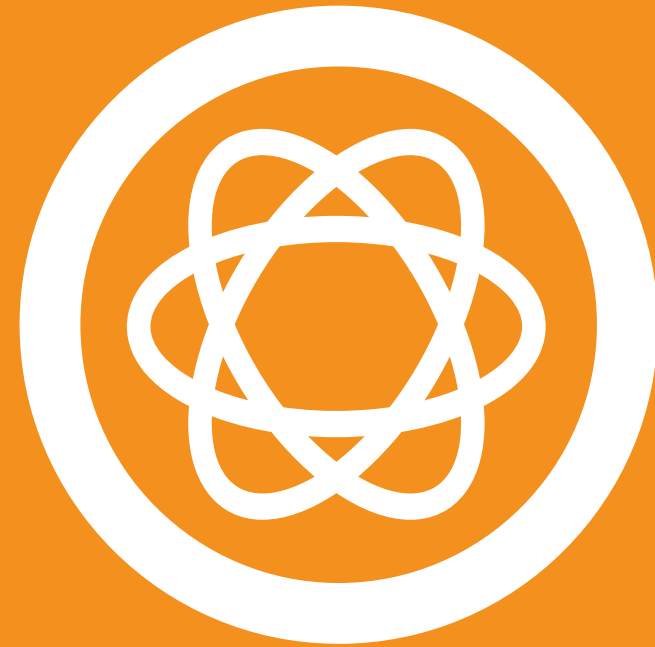
For too long, society has treated alcohol and drug addiction as a problem of willpower. Or the result of bad decision-making. And, frequently, as criminal behavior.

Addiction hasn't been seen as a public health issue—which it is. Many people don't think of addiction the way they do other long-term health conditions such as diabetes or hypertension. These chronic diseases, like addiction, can be controlled by medication and life-style changes.

Still, people with hypertension and diabetes sometimes relapse—just like those with addiction. A diabetic who relapses may get a change in treatment.

For people with addiction, the situation is different. Because addiction is often mistakenly attributed to a lack of willpower, shortsighted policies have been implemented that make it difficult for people to obtain on-going treatment. If people with addiction relapse, they often cannot readily access treatment, remain on waiting lists as their disease worsens, and can get caught up in the criminal justice system in the process.

A LITTLE SCIENCE



Since 1950, the American Medical Association has designated addiction as a long-term disease.

Drugs and alcohol affect people differently. Some people never become addicted. Others are hooked after only a short time. Repeated use can change the brain's structure and the way it works, often leading to compulsive behavior. And, like other diseases, addiction is influenced by genetics, environment and other issues.

The good news is that addiction can be managed successfully. Some people must change their life styles. Others need therapy and group support. Still others require medication. And some need all of this and more. The key is to ensure that patients receive the treatment that works best for them. For the past 30 years, extensive research repeatedly has

confirmed that treatment results in reduced drug use, lower crime, better parenting and family involvement, and decreased rates of HIV transmission, and is cost effective. A recent study showed a dramatic reduction in alcohol use and drug use—52 and 69 percent, respectively—one year after treatment.

Individuals who are addicted, like those with other chronic health conditions, may experience periods of relapse and remission over decades. The one-year relapse rates for addiction, asthma and hypertension are quite similar at 60 percent, 70 percent and 55 percent, respectively. With all of these diseases, patients need access to health care providers who can guide them through the rocky times.

THE OSI APPROACH

A STRONG STAFF

OSI program staff are knowledgeable experts in their fields, who share a fundamental belief that change requires work both within and outside of public systems. They draw on strong working relationships with activists, service providers, the affected communities, researchers and policymakers.



“From the beginning, OSI has realized we cannot arrest our way out of the drug problem. They have been instrumental in funding efforts to address both the roots of drug addiction as well as improving and enhancing drug treatment. Their efforts have been tremendously helpful to Baltimore and the region.”

– PETER BEILENSON

Former Baltimore City Health Commissioner under former Mayors Kurt Schmoke and Martin O’Malley, current Howard County Health Officer

AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY

The goal of the Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative is straightforward: we need sustained and expanded public funding to increase the availability of drug addiction treatment so more people can get the help they need, especially those who are uninsured. To accomplish this, we are pursuing an integrated set of strategies:

- 1 Ensuring treatment providers use evidence-based practices so they spend existing resources effectively and lengthen the retention of patients in treatment
- 2 Mobilizing community and business leaders to embrace a public health approach to drug treatment, to support expanded public funding for treatment, and to hire people in recovery
- 3 Building the capacity of nonprofit organizations so they can advocate effectively for Baltimoreans in need of treatment
- 4 Engaging policymakers and government to change policy, leading to increased and sustainable funding and effective treatment
- 5 Removing barriers to treatment for those eligible for public benefits that cover treatment

“OSI’s targeted investments have supported key expansions in capacity and improvements in care. OSI’s support of the infrastructure of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems has improved the effectiveness of the agency’s management and oversight. OSI has been an essential partner for public health progress on substance abuse in the city over the last decade.”

– DR. JOSHUA SHARFSTEIN

Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,
Former Baltimore City Health Commissioner



STRENGTHENING KEY ORGANIZATIONS

Since we began our work in the city, OSI has helped to improve Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, the city's public drug addiction treatment authority. We convened a national Scientific Advisory Committee of experts to enable the city to create an accessible, high-quality treatment system. That advisory committee continues to meet regularly to ensure that the system delivers high-quality treatment, uses proven approaches and produces high quality outcomes.

OSI staff serve on the BSAS board and work to make the system efficient by using data to monitor and improve the quality of care. With OSI staff support, for instance, BSAS is able to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment programs and shift funds to more successful programs that keep patients in treatment longer and achieve better outcomes.

OSI also is working with BSAS to decrease the wait times for people to get into treatment from three weeks to 48 hours at treatment centers in the city.

The result: Baltimore's treatment system has become a national model of accountability.

EXPANDING QUALITY TREATMENT

Buprenorphine—a tablet that can be taken at home—is an extremely effective, relatively new treatment for heroin addiction. OSI was at the forefront of efforts to convince hospitals, community health clinics and other treatment providers to adopt this medication for appropriate patients with heroin addiction. This work paved the way for the Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative.

The Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative aims to increase access to buprenorphine significantly by enabling health clinics to offer the medication for a longer time period, thus permitting better recovery. Patients also receive help applying for publicly-funded health insurance to pay for the medication and accessing primary care physicians who can prescribe buprenorphine for the long term.

OSI provided critical funding to link the three agencies coordinating the initiative—the Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems and Baltimore HealthCare Access. The project now is self-sustaining, thanks to state funds supported by the Governor who recognized the importance of making this drug available.

“Medication to treat drug addiction is expensive, and most treatment programs nationally find that its cost is the chief barrier for uninsured patients. In Baltimore, however, recent funding from OSI to cover the cost of buprenorphine has enabled us to treat uninsured clients who otherwise would not have had access to such treatment. The funding—and foresight to support this treatment—has allowed us to implement a model that is far ahead of most other cities.”

- WENDY MERRICK

Director of the Substance Abuse Program at Total Health Care, a community health center that is part of the Baltimore Buprenorphine Initiative



MOBILIZING LEADERS TO SUPPORT SOUND POLICIES

Every doctor or nurse in a primary care practice, hospital or clinic who becomes part of a recovery team can potentially convince others about the importance of drug addiction treatment. A network of medical professionals is critical to ensure that treatment is more widespread and delivered to those who need it. Toward that end, OSI-Baltimore supported the Center for Healthy Maryland, the nonprofit arm of the Maryland Medical Society, to increase the number of physicians who support and provide treatment. The Maryland Medical Society, in turn, uses the Center's work to inform its addiction treatment advocacy efforts in Annapolis.



"At a recent briefing for providers held at Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, I looked around the room and thought about how many of these programs have benefited either directly from an OSI grant or indirectly from training and support funded by OSI. All of the nine treatment providers present had been materially assisted in some way."

- REBECCA RUGGLES
Director of Special Projects,
Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers

BUILDING NONPROFITS' CAPACITY TO ADVOCATE

Expanding treatment capacity and funding requires advocacy. OSI directly supports nonprofit organizations that advocate for expanded treatment. The Maryland chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence mobilizes people in recovery and others. The Citizens Planning and Housing Association develops "common ground" agreements between local treatment centers and community associations to build local receptivity and support for treatment.

These organizations foster dialogue among individuals, community organizations and treatment providers. Such advocacy resulted in changes to zoning laws that allowed drug treatment clinics to be located in areas zoned for medical offices. In addition to educating and mobilizing the public, these organizations successfully educate local, state and federal public officials on the benefits of treatment in order to increase funding and to ensure it is used effectively. **People in recovery must have a voice in the creation of policies affecting them.**


"It's impossible to imagine where our treatment system would be without OSI's commitment to the organizations that advocate for better treatment and recovery policies. Indeed, OSI's support on a multitude of issues initiated by local and statewide advocates has produced real reforms. OSI's support, for example, has helped communities and treatment providers put aside differences and find 'common ground' with the intent of increasing access to and the availability of treatment in Baltimore and the region."

- CARLOS HARDY
Director of Public Affairs, Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems



RESULTS FOR BALTIMORE

- ❗ City funding for drug treatment for the uninsured and underinsured has nearly tripled over five years to an annual budget of more than \$50 million.
- ❗ Baltimore's treatment slots more than doubled from 4,100 to 8,900 slots within the same time period.
- ❗ The number of individuals treated annually doubled from 11,000 to 26,000.
- ❗ Experts believe that expanded drug addiction treatment has contributed to the city's progress in other areas, including:
 - A 25 percent decline in new HIV diagnoses from 1998 to 2004.
 - A 41 percent drop in property crimes from 1998 to 2005.
- ❗ Buprenorphine treatment for heroin addiction is now available in drug clinics, health centers and physicians' offices.
- ❗ Hospital physicians now refer patients with addiction to local treatment centers upon release from hospitals.



"I had been on drugs for over 15 years when the Needle Exchange Program referred me to Total Health Care. I was a mess. I didn't know anything about buprenorphine, but I decided to take a chance on myself. Buprenorphine made me feel normal. It stopped me from chasing drugs and after a while I didn't have a desire to use. Because of this program I have been able to work on myself. I have reconnected with my family. I've been back to church. I'm getting ready to start a GED program, and today I found out I'm getting my own apartment. I feel like I'm a miracle."

- DARLENE K.

A participant in the Baltimore Buprenorphine Project at the Total Health Care clinic.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE



The Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative has significantly expanded the number of vulnerable Baltimoreans receiving drug addiction treatment.

Now it is time to ensure that all, or at least a majority, of people who want treatment get it. Once the city reaches this critical "tipping point," Baltimore will experience the full public health benefits of treatment. Having more people in treatment will help to reduce HIV and hepatitis transmission, crime, prison overcrowding, and the number of children placed in foster care. It will make our neighborhoods healthier and stronger.

OSI also works to prevent young people from getting involved with drugs or alcohol in the first place. Our extensive support for after-school and summer programs provides positive, structured activities for young people when they are not in school. We have been deeply involved in initiatives to keep children in school, instead of simply suspending them and sending them home unsupervised where they may become engaged in drug markets.

OSI-Baltimore invites you to make a gift of support that will expand addiction treatment and secure greater public funding for this important program that ultimately will make Baltimore a better place to live and work. We offer important learning opportunities and forums about drug addiction treatment so our donors are better informed about the advances Baltimore is making on addiction treatment.

We hope this publication has given you a better understanding of OSI's strategy and the great strides we are making. We hope you will become more engaged in this initiative. **Please join us.**

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE TACKLING DRUG ADDICTION INITIATIVE, CONTACT US:

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Or visit: www.osi-baltimore.org



Almost everyone in the United States knows someone who suffers from alcohol or drug addiction. These are mothers. Sisters. Brothers. Fathers. They suffer from a chronic health condition. And, like diabetes and hypertension, addiction can be treated. Treatment works.

Expanding drug addiction treatment in Baltimore will put more people on the road to recovery so they can become part of their families and communities once again.

And that will make Baltimore a healthier city, too.

