

# Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

## Supporting Comprehensive Strategies and Integrated Services



**Encouraging best treatment practices, coordinating national communication campaigns and developing guidelines for quality treatment** are just a few examples of Abt Associates' work in the addictions field. And whether it's a policy or program of national importance or helping a state with communications, every facet of our work is grounded in a commitment to technical excellence.

Abt Associates is widely recognized for our expertise in designing and executing strategies, initiatives, policies and programs and managing communications campaigns that support addiction prevention, treatment and recovery.

### Capabilities and Services

- Research and evaluation
- Data collection and analysis
- Policy and economic analysis
- Systems design
- Project management
- Technical assistance and training
- Health communications

### Selected Clients

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA)
- Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

### Our Work

#### Health Communications & Marketing

Abt delivers communication services to support SAMHSA's mission to prevent and reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on Americans. This includes developing multi-media communication resources for use by the field and general public, as well as supporting partnerships with federal, national and state entities to advance the substance abuse prevention and treatment and mental health agenda.



We also provide communications support and outreach to encourage enrollment in the nation's new healthcare insurance marketplace. We are also researching tobacco use prevention and cessation messaging for individuals with mental and substance use disorders.

Abt is creating a strategic communication plan for SAMHSA to guide its activities—incorporating all communication platforms and covering a wide range of audiences, events and national health observances.

The Abt team leads National Recovery Month, the award-winning national health communications campaign that promotes the societal benefits of treatment for substance use and mental disorders, celebrates people in recovery, lauds the contributions of treatment providers and promotes the message that recovery is possible.

Further, Abt is creating and applying prevention messages and producing materials for CSAP, including short videos for SAMHSA's Prevention Day. We have also supported the continuation and evolution of SAMHSA's prevention-themed section of the DEA's "Target America" traveling exhibit.

### Research And Evaluation

#### Estimating the Extent of Painkiller Prescription Diversions to Illicit Use by "Doctor Shoppers"

This study by Abt determined the extent of opioid medications diverted to illicit use by "doctor shoppers." The NIDA-funded study—the first of its kind—revealed that 4.3 million prescriptions for painkillers were obtained by individuals seeking prescriptions for the same drugs from different physicians. Abt's study was published in *PLOS ONE*.

## **Determining Disparities in ADHD Treatment in the U.S.**

This study by Abt revealed that the use of amphetamine medications to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the U.S. varies widely from state to state and even more dramatically from one county to another.

The NIDA-funded study was published in the November 2013 issue of *Psychiatric Services*. It is the first study to estimate treatment rates using prescription records of individuals.

## **Tracking Diversion of Prescription Drugs**

In a two-year epidemiological study for NIDA, Abt tracked the diversion of 25 controlled drugs from retail pharmacies for illicit use. The study laid the foundation for the ongoing national Rx Drug Diversion Surveillance Program.

## **Technical Assistance**

### **Building a Behavioral Health Leadership Development Program**

Abt has been retained by SAMHSA to design and implement a comprehensive Behavioral Health Leadership Development Program (BHLDP) for Project LIFT participants and stakeholders. The purpose of BHLDP is to enhance program participants' leadership competencies and keep them informed of developments in behavioral health care, general health care, and health information technology.

### **Designing SAMHSA's School for Prevention Leadership**

Abt developed an eight-month intensive program for SAMHSA's School for Prevention Leadership. The program, designed for untrained substance abuse prevention specialists, provides leadership training and subject matter expertise, detailed and personalized assessments and instruction in areas such as conflict management, critical thinking and problem-solving, emotional intelligence and transformational leadership.

### **Carrying Out Initiatives to Enhance Addictions Services**

As the prime contractor for SAMHSA's Partners for Recovery Initiative, Abt developed and implemented products, strategies and programs. The initiative supported and provided technical resources to policymakers and providers in the addictions and mental health fields.

## **Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in Substance Abuse Treatment in State Medicaid Programs**

Abt developed implementation reports on evidence-based practices (EBPs) in substance abuse treatment to guide states in the reimbursement of these practices within the Medicaid program. The SAMHSA-funded reports highlighted reimbursement strategies—including blended and braided funding—and identified best policy practices in support of the EBPs.

## **Educating Patients about Their Legal Rights**

This webinar series, developed with the Legal Action Center for SAMHSA, educates individuals in recovery and those receiving medication-assisted treatment about their legal rights and responsibilities in employment, housing, education, healthcare and other areas of life.

## **Helping Community-Based Providers Understand the Military Patient**

This report for SAMHSA provides community-based mental health and substance use disorder providers with vital information about the structure and culture of current or potential patients who are members of the armed services (including the National Guard and Reserves).

## **Contact**

For more information on Abt Associates and our work in addiction, contact:

### **Christopher Spera**

Division Vice President, U.S. Health  
301.347.5950  
Chris\_Spera@abtassoc.com

**Abt Associates** is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 60 countries.

