

# Prize Bowl for Addictions

Twelve studies by NIDA show powerful, fast, low-cost results in reducing the hardest drug addictions. We can do this now in every community to reduce relapse and recidivism of hundreds of thousands of prisoners re-entering society each year.

mall reinforcements and prizes for recovery behaviors of the persons with the most serious addictions—methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, etc.—radically reduces relapse and recidivism more than expensive treatments in well conducted, multiple studies by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.<sup>1-17</sup> The results are quick, dramatic, reliable and extremely cost-effective, having many effects related to the goals of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The strategy is called the "prize bowl or the "fish bowl" simplified variation of contingency management<sup>18-20</sup>, and the "prize bowl" is an evidencebased kernel.<sup>21</sup> Such contingency management strategies are far more cost-efficient than even well regarded evidence-based programs in head-to-head studies.22 23

Typically, clients in a prize-bowl condition win small prizes varying from "atta-boy/girl cards" to small tickets worth a few dollars for engaging in recovery behaviors and not being dirty in UA's. Total rewards of about \$300 per client produce results that many times better than other therapies or conditions<sup>19</sup>, and prizes can be donated from the community in part.

#### **Behavioral Vaccines for Population-Wide Change**

According to Bureau of Justice reports, approximately 650,000 state and federal prisoners reenter society each year. With the economic downturn, states are accelerating release of prisoners as well as reducing probation and parole or related community services for substance abuse treatment. Before these new developments, about half of all former prisoners are returned to prison for a new crime or parole violation within 3 years. Substance abuse problems account significantly for both the original arrest and return to prison. These conditions represent an enormous threat to public safety and public health, as drug users and former prisoners are more likely to have infectious diseases such as hepatitis A, B, C or some combination.

If the practical, proven, and simple strategy (kernel) of the "prize bowl" were implemented on a population-

wide basis, significant change could happen in every community of America. When widely used, such a kernel can become "behavioral vaccines." Like publichealth vaccines given to adults for hepatitis, behavioral vaccines can be give to adults who have been exposed to or have a risky behavioral pattern.

## **Rapid Change Strategy**

Using existing grantee structures (e.g., Drug Free Communities, Weed & Seed, SPF-SIG, Title IV Sub-Grantees), applications could be announced for twenty-five hundred (2,500), 24-month positions, to implement the Prize Bowl to impact recovery and reentry among 200,000 returning prisoners to communities in America. Individuals for the positions would not have to have advanced degrees, though they might be counselors or others who have or might lose their positions because of the economic crisis. Each full-time position supervise approximately 85 returning prisoners.

Using proven modern technologies, the training and supervision of these positions could be nationally implemented with regional or state assistance.

### **Measures of Rapid Change**

This plan includes careful documentation of change conducted by leading intervention scientists in the world, including:

- Reduced indices of violent crime and domestic violence
- Reduce criminal offenses of all kinds
- Reduced measures of drug, alcohol and tobacco
  use
- Reduced drug use offenses
- Reduced drug dealing offenses
- Lower rates of use of psychotropic drugs and mental illnesses common in former prisoners
- Reduced serious health complications such as hepatitis, HIV and emergency care utilization

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