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# Press Release

NAATP joins other organizations in recognizing the opportunity presented by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) release of latest findings

The IOM study “Crossing the Quality Chasm: Adaptation to Mental Health and Addiction Disorders” issues a call to remover barriers to effective Mental and Substance-Use Disorder Treatment

Lancaster, PA, November 4, 2005: The **National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers** (NAATP) is a national trade association representing nearly 300 organizations providing addiction treatment. The association works to support its members and ensure that quality addiction treatment is accessible to persons needing treatment and that treatment. Additionally, NAATP has represented the addiction treatment field in efforts to end discrimination against addicted individuals; including restrictions many health insurance providers place on addiction treatment benefits. NAATP joins the growing list of individuals and organizations that recognize the immediate and long term importance of the recently released IOM study. NAATP is especially supportive of a consistent theme in this 465 page report which calls for the need to eliminate all barriers to care for individuals diagnosed with an addictive disorder. Barrier removal and elimination has long been a key issue supported by the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers.

NAATP is especially supportive of the IOM's call for “health care plans” removal of barriers and restrictions on effective and appropriate treatment. Such barriers are generally not found or experienced when persons seek care for the treatment of other diseases.

Dr. Ken Ramsey, Chair of the Board of Directors of NAATP and President and CEO of Gateway Rehabilitation Centers noted “We now have a blue print produced by one of the most esteemed organizations at the national level (Institute of Medicine) which calls for addiction treatment to be recognized and integrated into primary health care in this country. Such a move will ultimately expand

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the knowledge base of this disease, but it will also enable a more seamless approach to treating this disease and the other concurrent health issues persons often have with their addictive disorder.”

A few of the recommendations with in the recently released study are especially critical to this integration process. NAATP notes the following:

- ◆ **Mental and substance-use problems and illnesses should not be viewed as separate from and unrelated to overall health** and general health care; Government agencies, purchasers, health plans and accrediting groups should create incentives and policies to increase collaboration among health care providers;
- ◆ HHS should lead efforts to **develop an infrastructure for measuring and improving the quality of mental and substance-use health care by funding an effort similar to the National Quality Forum** to identify and implement quality measures;
- ◆ HHS should **synthesize and disseminate scientific evidence on effective services for mental and substance-use conditions**;
- ◆ Federal and state governments should revise laws, regulations and practices that hinder health professionals' ability to quickly obtain and share information on patient care.

Mr. Ed Diehl, the vice chair of the Board of NAATP and President and CEO of Seabrook House commented “This report represents the first step in a long journey. The report pulls together the input from major stakeholders and charts a direction which could profoundly impact the way in which addiction treatment is delivered and financed. To accomplish this, the report needs to remain a dynamic tool and not turn into a paper weight on a shelf.”

While the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers responded favorably to the report in general, many members of the organization expressed disappointment that it did not more fully address the primacy of addictive disorders, choosing instead to combine them with mental disorders; a practice which many believe adds to the public's confusion regarding the true nature and cause of addiction. The organization also hoped the report would more fully address the chronic nature of addiction, recognizing the need for life-long medical management of this potentially fatal disease. Relapse, which for many persons is part of a recovery process, can only be fully understood if viewed in the context of the chronicity of the condition.

NAATP considers the report an important tool and a significant first step in ending the discrimination and road blocks which impede persons from seeking and receiving addiction treatment. The organization looks forward to working with Congress and the health care industry to explore the best and most expeditious ways to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers is a trade association representing nearly 300 of the best known providers of addiction treatment both in this country and internationally. The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers' office and executive Dr. Ronald J. Hunsicker are located in Lancaster, PA and NAATP is governed by a Board of Directors from across the country. Additional information on this release or on the work of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers may be obtained by contacting the NAATP office at 717-392-8480.

NAATP: <http://naatp.org>