

NIATx and TRI Partner for New RWJF Initiative *Advancing Recovery*

As part of its efforts to improve addiction treatment quality, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) selected the Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx) to serve as the National Program Office (NPO) for its new *Advancing Recovery* program. *Advancing Recovery* is an \$11 million initiative to promote the use of evidence-based practices in clinical settings through innovative partnerships between providers and single state agencies. Six state-provider partnerships will be selected to participate in a learning network that will provide technical assistance and coaching to participants to improve the delivery of addiction treatment. Funding will support the process of making changes at both the state and provider levels to maximize the implementation of proven addiction treatment practices.

Advancing Recovery will be directed by David Gustafson, Ph.D., of the Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and Thomas McLellan, Ph.D., from the Treatment Research Institute (TRI) in Philadelphia, Pa. With several years' experience in healthcare and addiction treatment research, Drs. Gustafson and McLellan are uniquely suited to oversee this initiative.

Dr. Gustafson, a professor of Industrial Engineering at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, has directed NIATx, a national learning collaborative committed to improving client access to and retention in addiction treatment, since 2003. NIATx helps member treatment organizations make more efficient use of their capacity by using process improvement to foster organizational changes. NIATx has also undertaken a State Pilot Project to Improve Addiction Treatment, based on the premise that states can have a profound impact on addiction treatment performance.

A professor of Psychiatry in Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. McLellan founded TRI in 1992 with the mission of bringing substance abuse treatment and policy issues to the attention of mainstream healthcare and healthcare policy. TRI co-directs another RWJF program with the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania—The Center for Organization and Management in Addiction Treatment (COMAT). Similar to the *Advancing Recovery* initiative, COMAT looks at how administrative practices can impact the delivery and quality of addiction treatment. Dr. McLellan also serves as editor of the *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*.

Program staff bring a wealth of experience in healthcare management, healthcare policy, and addiction treatment services to the *Advancing Recovery* program. Todd Molfenter, Ph.D., of NIATx serves as the project's deputy director. Dr. Molfenter has ten years' experience leading process improvement in healthcare settings, including work at The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Oh., and at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Boston, Mass. Key consultants include Mady Chalk, Ph.D., and John O'Brien. Dr. Chalk, now Director of the Center for Performance-based Policy at TRI, formerly served in the federal government as Director of the Division for Services Improvement in the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). O'Brien, Director of Resources for Recovery, has extensive experience designing and implementing system reform initiatives in behavioral healthcare. His efforts have focused on amending public financing and purchasing strategies at the state level.

Victor Capoccia, Ph.D., Senior Program Officer at RWJF, said of NIATx and TRI's expertise: "Tom McLellan and Dave Gustafson each bring special ingredients to the program—specialized treatment knowledge and organizational change and improvement strategies that are critical to making this initiative a success."

By impacting state- and provider-level practices that currently impede the use of evidence-based care, the Advancing Recovery program is expected to improve consumer outcomes and highlight addiction treatment as an essential component of the healthcare system. This new initiative complements RWJF's Cross-system Financing Strategies Initiative, which provides an opportunity for states, counties, and cities to develop strategies for coordinating funding across multiple public systems and agencies from federal, state and local dollars.

For more information on Advancing Recovery, visit the program Web site at www.advancingrecovery.net. Applications are due May 31, 2006; grant awards will be announced in November 2006.