The Alcohol and Other Drugs Advisory Board of Contra Costa County is comprised of 21 volunteers appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve as a mechanism for getting citizen input regarding the needs and concerns pertaining to the prevention and treatment of substance abuse in Contra Costa County, and to provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board accomplishes its advisory role by networking with local community coalitions/agencies, promoting community education around substance abuse, advocating at different levels for public awareness, and disseminating information about ordinances and legislation that support AOD prevention and treatment services in the county.

The FY 00-01 was a very challenging but productive year for the Board. It was challenging because our work is constantly hindered by the stigma and prejudice historically placed on addiction and recovery. Therefore, helping others to understand that addiction is a preventable and treatable disease that requires a medical and public health solution is not an easy task. Furthermore, in the midst of scarcity of resources and as a direct consequence of the way society views substance abuse, there is a huge disparity between the amount of resources available within the system and the severity of needs. We consider the support received from the Board of Supervisors, Dr. William Walker, Health Services Director and the Community Substance Abuse Administration the cornerstone of our success.

The present report highlights our achievements during the fiscal year 2000-01. Generally speaking, we have been successful at attaining our goals. Nevertheless, we consider our job a work in progress. As we solidify the work completed and present our accomplishments, we realize that a lot more advocacy, education and support from the Board of Supervisors and the community will be needed to deal with the following issues:

Challenges

- While we strongly support the recommendations of the Grand Jury Report regarding Discovery House (a County owned residential treatment program for men), we also urge the Board of Supervisors to take immediate action. According to the report, Discovery House has a capacity for 24 males and has operated at full capacity since opening, with a waiting list of up to 160 applicants for the current year. Since the time we invited the Internal Operations Committee to visit Discovery House approximately two years ago, no action has been undertaken on this matter.

- In 1997, the Youth Study Report and recommendations presented to the Board of Supervisors was the catalyst to understanding the lack of AOD treatment services available to young people in the county. The outcome of the effort was the allocation of funds towards developing a continuum of care for youth including the expansion and enhancement of substance abuse treatment services for adolescents. The good news is that the number of youth who have received treatment services has dramatically increased. The bad news is that both Youth Treatment funds and Juvenile Treatment funds are threatened at the state level due to the incoming funds for Proposition 36. There are those who think that Proposition 36 will generate revenues for treatment in general, but what they ignore is that those funds will expand treatment services **exclusively** for adults, and not youth. The continuum of care for youth is brand new.
and the need was well documented, therefore, we must continue nurturing and enhancing the little we have.

- We encouraged school districts to conduct the California Healthy Kids Surveys (CHKS) to obtain standardized and scientific data regarding youth use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Out of 19 school districts in Contra Costa County, 16 conducted the CHKS; however only 11 have released the findings.

- We advocated for the enhancement of treatment services for women and their children through Prop 10 funds, but we are still preoccupied that Born Free a county operated program in Martinez (AOD outpatient treatment services for pregnant and parenting women) does not have a bathroom for the clients visiting the program.

- Through the stronger relationship that we have built with the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC), at least two trainings have been conducted in the community to local Municipal Advisory Councils about ABC regulations. We have also increased efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol however, recent statistics obtained from ABC for retail license violations in Contra Costa County indicate that most of them were due to sales to minors.

- Although most people enjoy some form of health insurance, most plans frequently impose higher copays or deductibles for people seeking treatment for addiction. It is important to ensure that there will be parity for the treatment of addiction as there is coverage for the treatment of other chronic health problems.

*Tom Aswad, Chair, and Harold Parsley, Vice Chair, accepting “The National Recovery Month” Proclamation at the Board of Supervisors, September 2000*
The Board selected and prioritized the following goals at the annual retreat held in February 2000. The goals were occasionally reviewed during the year to monitor progress in the different areas of work.

1. Support Proposition 10, advocate and facilitate allocation of funds to enhance women and children in AOD treatment
2. Advocate for treatment expansion
3. Continue Alcohol Policy Initiatives and Support of Environmental Prevention as a tool Reduce Youth Access to Alcohol
4. Follow up on Youth Study Recommendations

Goal #1
Support Proposition 10, advocate and facilitate allocation of funds to enhance women and children in AOD treatment

A letter was written to the Board of Supervisors in February 2000 to request a seat on the CCC Children and Families Commission. Although our request did not come to fruition, we joined the Health and Wellness Advisory Group that prepared recommendations for the Commission. Not surprisingly, we realized that substance abuse was a prevalent factor in many of the clients who enter the door of the various programs at the table.

The Youth and Family Committee of the Board visited existing programs to understand gaps in services. The need to expand and enhance treatment services for pregnant and parenting women and their children was very evident, as there are no current programs focusing on children as the co-recipient of services in the CSAS System of Care. Consequently, the CSAS administration submitted a proposal to the CCC Children and Families Commission in partnership with Children and Families Services. This goal is completed, but we are committed to continue monitoring progress and participate as needed.

Supervisor Gayle B. Uilkema presenting the “People Who Make A Difference” award to Ms. Donna Fabella, Children and Family Services (CFS) Director, May 2001
**Goal #2**

**Advocate for Treatment Expansion**

To truly advocate for treatment expansion the Board charged the Public Policy committee with the task of understanding the specific needs in Contra Costa County. The Committee held several meetings with the ACCESS Unit staff, which is the point of entry for substance abuse treatment and prevention services in the county.

We were shocked to learn that the average length of time waiting period for someone to be admitted into residential treatment is 12 weeks for women, 7 weeks for men and 8 weeks for prenatal (pregnant and parenting women). Additionally, the waiting list for women is much longer as compared to men. To decrease the waiting list without additional funds the length of time in residential treatment is impacted. Even worse, there is lack of sober living houses that can sustain the recovery of individuals once they have treatment.

Nonetheless, the CSAS administration continues to strive for high quality services, and at the last focus groups conducted, we heard from clients in the programs that they felt an overall satisfaction in the quality of services they were receiving. While we know that treatment expansion is not only a monumental task but also complex, we admit that unless we continue advocating for more AOD treatment services funds, we will not be effective at mitigating the needs to those who need treatment.

*Proposition 36 Debate facilitated by Tom Aswad at the Pacheco Community Center, September 2000*

The Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act: Proposition 36 was an opportunity for the Board to serve as a vehicle to disseminate information. Since the inception of the Proposition that is geared to the expansion of treatment services for adult non-violent offenders, the Board in conjunction with the Partners In Recovery Alliance (PIRA) facilitated 3 debates in the community prior to elections. The debate participants were clients, general public, people in recovery, agency providers, etc., and across the board there was a strong and unified voice for the need to increase treatment services and decriminalize addiction. The Board remains involved with the Proposition 36 Implementation Work Group and continues to retain this as a goal for the upcoming fiscal year. We are committed to making Proposition 36 a success in Contra Costa County!

*Beverly Dicken, District I member, introducing the agenda for Proposition 36 Debate, September 2000*
Continue Alcohol Policy Initiatives and Support of Environmental Prevention as a Tool to Reduce Youth Access to Alcohol

One of the objectives we had established for the year 00-01 was to strengthen the relationship with the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC). The collaborative spirit of Mr. Michael Naudon, ABC Director for the Oakland Office, and his staff has enabled us to accomplish most of our efforts in this area.

In partnership with the ABC and some Board of Supervisors office staff we were able to increase the knowledge and understanding of ABC laws regarding retail alcohol sales, licensing regulations and most importantly, empowering local decision makers and residents to exercise their power and duty to determine the number and type of alcohol licenses the community needs. We held three educational presentations to local government bodies, law enforcement and community residents in unincorporated areas of the county. During the last year four different licenses in various locations of the county were thoroughly considered as part of the decision-making process.

The success of the story does not necessarily lie on whether licenses were approved or not, but on the fact that for a significant amount of time, the benefit and/or the impact of the license in question was weighed by all of the stakeholders. For example, in Bay Point, it took three regular monthly meetings of the Bay Point Municipal Advisory Council to deny a liquor license. The meeting was attended by those who thought the license would be a financial asset to the community, those who considered the license a detriment to the community, the ABC investigator, the local Sheriff Department, etc. Together, all parties, including youth and people in recovery, made an informed and sound decision pertaining to this particular license.

One of the single most difficulties to building alcohol and drug-free communities that provide healthy environments for our children and youth, and sustain people in recovery, is closely associated with the norms and attitudes that society has towards alcohol. No one questions the role that the mass media plays luring vulnerable populations to drink through glamorizing and associating drinking with fun. We must continue educating the community and ourselves, and to question the extent to which we may be contributing to support those norms.

*Supervisor Donna Gerber, District III, presenting the “People Who Make A Difference” awards 00-01 to Cindy Wheeler recognizing her efforts for implementing “Every Fifteen Minutes” (EFM) at San Ramon Valley High School. EFM is a program designed to educate high school students about the dangers of drinking and driving.*
Alcohol is still considered the gateway drug for young people. In the words of youth: “Alcohol is available, cheap, attractive, flavorful and people don’t even get carded”. The most recent statistics received from ABC, indicate that between the years of 1999 and 2001 total of 58 violations occurred in the County. 53 of the violations were due to sales to minors during decoy operations. Alcohol is sold at community functions and is even used as a fundraiser by organizations, which by their nature and send a double message for youth. The Board is committed to the Alcohol Policy Initiatives as an ongoing goal, with the understanding that to be effective at positively making an impact in this area, a community environmental approach is required, and we must all share the responsibility.

Follow up on Youth Study Recommendations

The specific objectives of this goal were:

- Increase support for youth treatment and intervention efforts by providing consistent available data, such as the results of the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)
- Work collaboratively with Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) Coordinators
- Expand youth treatment and intervention resources by assisting the CSAS Division examining existing resources and identifying gaps and areas of priorities
- Advocating in other systems for the screening of youth presenting AOD problems, such as juvenile justice, probation, mental health, etc.
- Promote a Family-centered approach to treatment services
We are pleased to report that we have a stronger relationship with the (SDFSC) Coordinators and we have assigned a permanent liaison position to the group. We supported and served as proctors to conduct the survey in the majority of school Districts. Out of a total of 19 school districts from Fall'99 through Spring 01, 16 conducted the CHKS and only 11 have released the findings. *(For a copy of the Contra Costa County Report prepared by WestEd contact Fatima Matal Sol at the CSAS Administration (925) 313-6311).

During the summer of 1999, we joined the CSAS administration efforts to streamline prevention services and maximize existing resources. The decrease of universal prevention and increase of indicated and selective prevention, coupled with serving populations at much higher risk has greatly contributed with identifying young people earlier in the continuum, and providing referrals to other ancillary services, thus preventing bigger problems.

CSAS in conjunction with service providers have also adopted the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) Best Practices and will institute prevention programs that meet the guidelines of the principles of effectiveness. Prevention programs in the county will be supported by scientific research and measured outcomes. At the core of the principles of effectiveness are family centered interventions when the family unit is considered as the recipient of services, as opposed to focusing on youth only.

*The Board acknowledges every year (with The People Who Make a Difference Award) those individual who contribute towards reducing substance abuse with The People Who Make a Difference Award. This is an effort of the Public Relations Committee. Supervisor Gioia, District 1, presents a posthumous award. May 2001*

**EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND COLLABORATION**

Besides focusing efforts in the four goals selected during the retreat in February, the Board also achieved success in the areas of education, advocacy and collaboration:

- The Public Relations Committee and CCTV produced two live shows to educate the viewers on two topics that have recently garnered increased interest: Methamphetamines and Ecstasy. A panel of experts in specific areas including law enforcement, medical, environmental hazards, counseling, individuals in recovery, etc., shared their knowledge on the topic, followed by calls from the public. “A Call to Action” was an effective outreach tool. In one particular instance it allowed us to make a quick intervention and referral for someone who was in crisis.
People Who Make A Difference Awards was celebrated on May 2001, with much success, as we were able to recognize numerous individuals who on daily basis work in the trenches to combat substance abuse. From law enforcement to community residents, their efforts were applauded at the Board of Supervisors.

We received three proclamations from the Board of Supervisors: Alcohol Awareness Month, National Recovery Month and Red Ribbon Week.

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Not only is there a stronger relationship between our Board and the county’s Mental Health Commission, but we now have a joint project, the Dual Diagnosis Work Group, spearheaded by the Health Services Department, and fueled by our enthusiasm and commitment to improve the lives of those who enter the doors of any of the two systems.

At the national level, the Board has a presence in the National Recovery Movement (NRM). Some of the projects of the NRM have been collecting input from different groups and individuals in the nation regarding AOD treatment. The Board was part of the focus groups providing feedback to the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment National Initiative: “Changing the Conversation”