

# Untreated Addiction and the Foster Care System

FROM THE DESK OF  
REPRESENTATIVE  
ANDY OLSON

## Partners

Governor's Council  
on Alcohol and Drugs

OLCC - Oregon Liquor  
Control Commission

Ecumenical Ministries  
of Oregon

OPERA - Oregon  
Prevention Education  
Recovery Association

Oregon Partnership

ACCBO - Addiction  
Counselor Certification  
Board of Oregon

AOC - Association  
of Oregon Counties

AFSCME - American  
Federation of State,  
County and Municipal  
Employees

AOCMHP - Association  
of Oregon Community  
Mental Health Programs

CARSA - Community  
Action to Reduce  
Substance Abuse

Citizens Crime  
Commission

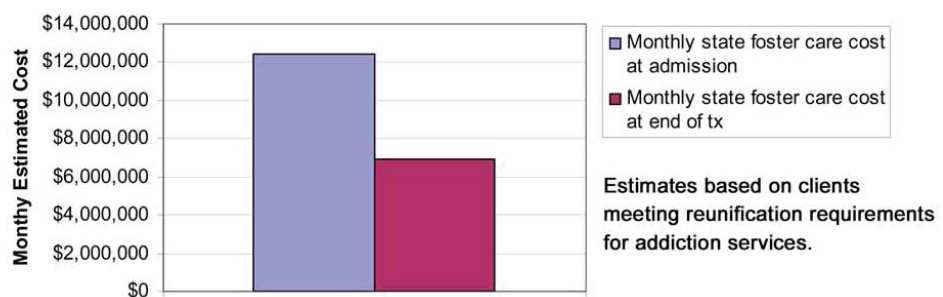
American Association  
of University Women  
of Oregon

In 2006, 46.7% of parents with children in foster care needed substance abuse treatment but were turned away. New treatment and sobriety requirements of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 meant those parents would lose custody of their children permanently, meaning years of foster care costs for hundreds of children and a trail of broken families.

The Legislature began to address part of that unmet need in 2007 by investing \$10.4 million to pay for Intensive Treatment and Recovery Services for these parents. So far, since those dollars were deployed in 2008, 140 children have been reunited with their families as a result, saving the state \$276,406 per month in avoided foster care costs. That monthly savings, multiplied by the years those children would otherwise have spent in state care, represents a whopping return on investment.

The savings resulting from the treatment provided to parents in 2007 tells the same story. Substance abuse treatment saves the state money and it saves families.

### Estimated One Month Foster Care Cost Before and After Treatment



Alcohol abuse was a factor in 55.2 percent of cases where children were removed from their parents/guardians in 2007 and drug abuse was a factor in 55 percent of cases. 2,767 parents received treatment and met reunification requirements specific to addiction services in 2007. Based on a \$1,974 per month average cost per child in foster care, a one month estimated cost savings to DHS equals \$5,462,971 for those parents meeting reunification requirements and able to safely take care of their children.

\*Data Sources Used: Oregon's Client Process Monitoring System (CPMS) for adult clients receiving treatment in 2007 (for performance measures only closed records and outpatient/residential services were used, methadone maintenance and detoxification services were excluded); NSDUH 2005/2006 (most recent years of released statistical information, Oregon's statistics from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health for adults ages 18 and greater); and Portland State University Population Research Center census adult population estimates 2007; Stata 10.0 for statistical analysis with group differences significant at  $p < 0.05$

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