



COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

News Release

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COMMUNITY ADVOCATES RECEIVES \$75,000 FROM HELEN BADER FOUNDATION TO EXPAND ACCESS TO ADDICTION TREATMENT

Three-Year Grant Will Support Health Care, Treatment Delivery Reform

Milwaukee (Dec. 18, 2008)—The Helen Bader Foundation announced yesterday that Community Advocates, Inc. will receive a three-year, \$75,000 grant to help fund the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative (MATI), a multiyear project to expand access to high-quality treatment for people suffering from drug and alcohol addiction, according to Joe Volk, Community Advocates executive director.

MATI, a collaboration among local advocacy, law enforcement and public health organizations, will work to stem a growing problem in Milwaukee: the inability of men and women who are suffering from addiction to receive sufficient treatment. A recent study by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that in 2004, more than 82,000 Milwaukee County residents who needed addiction treatment were denied services due to lack of health insurance, inadequate insurance coverage or a lack of available services.

This alarming “treatment gap” mirrors a national problem—in 2007, 23.2 million Americans needed treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, but only 10 percent were able to receive it.

“Milwaukee’s inability to provide much-needed addiction treatment services to its citizens must end,” said Robin B. Mayrl, Helen Bader Foundation Vice President of Program Development. “The Helen Bader Foundation recognizes the terrible ramifications on Milwaukee’s public health and public safety of not treating addicted men and women. We are proud to be a part of the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative and are confident that it will bring about real, tangible change in Milwaukee.”

Funding from the Helen Bader Foundation will support MATI’s efforts to increase available addiction treatment services by:

- Reforming Wisconsin’s health care system to extend coverage to all residents;

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- Ensuring addiction and mental health treatment is covered by insurance plans on a “parity” basis, i.e. to the same degree as physical health treatment; and
- Restructuring Milwaukee County’s addiction treatment delivery system to provide high-quality treatment on demand that integrates addiction services with mental and physical health services, as well as important non-health programs related to housing and employment.

“Correcting the vast systems failure that leaves more than 82,000 addicted citizens without the ability to receive treatment is impossible without the leadership of the philanthropic community. The Helen Bader Foundation has always been at the forefront in times of need,” said Volk. “Their commitment to the safety and health of Milwaukee’s citizens is long-established. We thank them for this important gift.”

In addition to the project stakeholders—Community Advocates, the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office, the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Department and Justice 2000—more than 80 organizations statewide have pledged their time and expertise to solve this crisis.

These organizations include advocacy groups such as the Benedict Center and the Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH); law enforcement agencies such as the Milwaukee Police Department and the Wisconsin Dept. of Corrections; health agencies such as the Milwaukee Health Department and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services; and addiction treatment providers such as M&S Clinical Services and La Causa.

In addition to the Helen Bader Foundation, the Milwaukee Addiction Treatment Initiative is funded by the Open Society Institute in Baltimore and Milwaukee’s Zilber Family Foundation.

Established in 1976, **Community Advocates, Inc.** is the largest human needs advocacy agency in Wisconsin and one of the few remaining community-based organizations of any kind that welcomes walk-in clients five days a week. Community Advocates provides skilled and results-focused advocacy and services to low-income individuals and families. Services include health care assistance, safety, utilities and housing assistance, disabilities advocacy and public policy advocacy.

The Helen Bader Foundation supports innovative projects and programs that advance the well-being of people and promote successful relationships with their families and communities. With offices in Milwaukee and Jerusalem, the Foundation awards an average of \$11 million per year in grants, totaling more than \$179 million in grants since 1992.