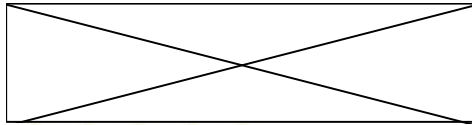


Safeguard funding for adult substance abuse services



The Florida Senate Subcommittee on Health and Human Services Appropriations released a budget proposal Monday recommending elimination of all general revenue funding for adult [substance abuse](#) services. This cut in funding is unacceptable and makes little sense.

These funding cuts mean all detoxification, residential and outpatient care funded with state general revenue will disappear. More than 37,000 adults across the state will lose access to treatment, and more than 2,200 Floridians working in community businesses will lose their jobs.

Cutting funding for substance use disorders will increase spending in other sectors of health care and other areas of our state budget. For example, 50 to 80 percent of youth in child welfare are there due to parental substance abuse problems. Fifty two percent of adults in treatment today have criminal justice involvement.

Plus, providing treatment makes good business sense and is a sound investment. It is much less expensive than what the state will pay for the consequences. Consider:

[Drug treatment for an adult](#) costs approximately \$2,400 vs. prison for the same person that would cost \$52,956 per year. The average drug sentence is 3.2 years.

Fifty eight percent of individuals receiving treatment are successful. This is a better record than other chronic health diseases. Treatment works.

Each dollar in state general revenue generates \$2 additional in federal block grant funds and local match. Treatment also reduces medical expenses, reduces crime and supports local jobs and our local economy. Treatment is cost-effective.

We live in a culture that promotes [addiction](#). Despite the "war" on drugs, [obesity](#), pornography and the like, people always seek the next level of instant relief from ever-increasing stress and pain. Substance abuse offers users a mirage of escape from adversity and stress. Although substance abuse numbs the pain, existing problems just get

worse. This is particularly true of [Florida](#), where [addictions](#) are on the uptick, as illustrated by the prescription drug abuse epidemic resulting in seven deaths in the state each day.

Addiction does not discriminate; it reaches every city, culture, race, age group, economic group and religion. An adult in need of substance abuse treatment could be the single parent living next door, the young adult who carries groceries to your car, a family member, your best friend. It could be anyone; it could be you. Please urge your senator to reject cutting these services.

Dr. Joel Kaufman is CEO of The Starting Place Inc. in Plantation.

This article is being published to the [Choopersguide website](#) as we are committed to the recovery of individuals who suffer from the [disease of alcoholism and drug addiction](#). Choopers Guide is active in the [recovery advocacy movement in the State of Florida](#). Choopers Guide is an addiction treatment and addiction information resource site with over 30,000 treatment provider listings for treatment programs, methadone clinics, [suboxone doctors](#), [drug and alcohol counselors](#) and [interventionists](#).