

**Statement of R. Gil Kerlikowke**  
**Director, National Drug Control Policy**  
**Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America National Recovery Month Lunch**  
**September 10, 2009**

Let me begin by thanking General Art Dean of CADCA for inviting us to join you today to celebrate recovery. Here with me is Dr. Tom McLellan, ONDCP Deputy Director and a leader in substance abuse treatment research. I would like also to applaud the volunteers who have worked hard to promote *National Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month* and engage our leaders and communities in support of recovery and reclaiming lives.

Sadly, very few of us have escaped the consequences of substance use disorders; most Americans have witnessed first-hand how drugs and alcohol can rob family and friends of prosperity, health, and happiness. National Recovery Month gives voice to the experience of so many who have had their lives turned upside down by dependence and addiction.

This morning, Dr. Broderick and Dr. Clark presented the 2008 NSDUH data. Although there have been some declines in drug use, they also announced that 23 million Americans meet the medical definition of abuse or addiction, and only 2.3 million received treatment. In 2008, 2.9 million reported using an illicit drug for the first time.

This is a wake up call. Each year, there are more people beginning to use illicit drugs than there are people receiving treatment.

Common sense, basic math, and human compassion dictate that we cannot allow this trend to continue. ONDCP is working with SAMHSA and other Federal partners to improve services for substance use disorders so we can increase the number of Americans in recovery. This includes improving prevention systems to deter drug abuse and training more physicians to recognize and screen for risky use of alcohol and drugs. We need the help of the recovery community to promote these efforts, particularly the wide-spread integration of [Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral, and Treatment](#) (SBIRT) into healthcare practices. This will also help destigmatize the issue and underscore that addiction is treatable disease, much like diabetes or hypertension.

During Recovery Month we applaud those who are reclaiming their lives from alcohol or drugs. Treatment is not easy work. It requires an intense amount of self-honesty, struggle, and determination. We must ensure that those on the path to recovery have the necessary tools and support, such as recovery support services, like those promoted by SAMHSA's Access to Recovery program, a voucher-based program that integrates recovery-oriented systems of care into state and local treatment systems.

I stand here with you today representing an Administration that is supportive of prevention, treatment, and recovery. I invite you all go to the ONDCP Web site to view the President's Proclamation declaring September [National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month](#).

This month we celebrate the millions of people who have reclaimed their lives from addiction, and we celebrate the collaboration of many partners who diligently challenge us all to work together to learn and heal. We are proud of your triumphs and look forward to helping many more individuals join you in recovery.