

FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY

LIFE IN RECOVERY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS

LIFE IN ADDICTION	LIFE IN RECOVERY
Average length of time in addiction: 18 years Average age of recovery: 36 years	Measured in 3 stages: < 3 years; 3 to 10 years; 10+ years
70% experienced financial problems	Healthy financial circumstance improved as recovery progressed. Paying bills on time and paying back personal debt doubled. Fifty percent more people in recovery pay their taxes.
22% frequently used emergency room departments	Costly emergency room use declined by a factor of nearly 10 , to 3%
Two-thirds had untreated mental health problems	Untreated mental health problems decreased fourfold
Over half (53%) reported one arrest; 1/3 experienced more than 1 incarceration	Involvement with the criminal justice system decreased tenfold
35% had had their drivers license revoked	Restoration of driving privileges
Half had been fired or suspended from work; 61% frequently missed work or school	10% reported employment problems; 83% are steadily employed, and 28% have started their own business
33% had dropped out of school	78% have furthered their education or training
Two-thirds participated in family activities	Participation in family activities increased by almost half (46%) to 95%
Volunteerism was at 31% and 61% voted	Volunteerism was 84% (more than doubled) and voting increased to 86% (an increase of 41%)

April 2013



LIFE IN RECOVERY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

End Discriminatory Barriers: Discriminatory policy and regulatory barriers at the state and federal levels should be removed in the areas of jobs, housing, health care, education, civic participation and transportation. These failed drug policies keep people in recovery from becoming contributing members of society.

Access to Care in the Health System: Assure access to and financing of a full range of health care and other services to support individuals in managing their addiction recovery under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid, the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant and other financing streams. Under the ACA newly covered individuals will receive addiction coverage because the ACA establishes 10 mandatory “essential health benefits” for newly eligible Medicaid enrollees and most individual and small group health plans. Over 32 million individuals will be able to access substance abuse benefits for the first time. Faces & Voices advocates for the inclusion of a broad scope of services, including peer recovery support services, in the essential health benefit. That way individuals in or seeking recovery will be able to get effective care for addiction as well as other health issues – bringing them into the health system and keeping them out of the criminal justice system.

Research: The National Institutes of Health should embark on a robust research agenda. With over 23 million Americans in addiction recovery, there is growing awareness, one-on-one and in communities, about individual recovery experiences. A recovery-oriented, recovery management-focused research and translation agenda will provide the recovery community, policy makers, service systems, clinicians, funders and individuals and families still struggling with addiction long overdue information on effective strategies for finding new lives, free from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.