

**Proposition 36: A Perspective From the
County Alcohol & Drug Program Administrators Association of California
(CADPAAC)**

The County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators did not write or sponsor Proposition 36, which was passed by over 60% of the voters in November of 2000, but since that time they have been primarily responsible for administering, at the county level, the substance abuse treatment programs to which Prop. 36 offenders are referred. This is no small task, but it is one for which neither the authors of Prop. 36 nor the state have committed sufficient resources.

The sponsors of Proposition 36 figured that \$120 million a year was adequate to fund the initiative for the first 5 years, after which the program would have demonstrated such success that the state would be more than willing to continue funding it at a sufficient level every year. In hindsight, this was a far too optimistic prediction. By most objective accounts, Prop. 36 has been successful, both in terms of financial and human benefits, but amazingly the Legislature and the Governor have not seen fit to reward that success with adequate funding.

A newly-released cost-benefits analysis by UCLA conclusively shows that Prop. 36 has saved the state anywhere from \$2.50 - \$4.00 for every dollar invested in court-supervised treatment. Moreover, the program has extended access to treatment to tens of thousands of individuals, half of whom had never before had such access, and many of whom were severely addicted and had lengthy criminal records. And yet the FY '06-07 state budget provides only level funding of \$120 million for Prop. 36, with an additional \$25 million available to counties conditioned upon certain reforms and outcomes.

County surveys conducted last year among Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators, in cooperation with County Probation Departments, indicate a projected shortfall of \$89.3 million to provide appropriate levels of treatment and supervision for Prop. 36 defendants. This is due to increased caseloads, increases in costs to provide services mandated by new state regulations, and the impact of the methamphetamine crisis, which makes further demands on the program. Meth is the primary drug of abuse for over half of the Prop. 36 caseload, and protocols for meth must allow for up to two years of treatment and supervision. Yet the surveys indicate that in many counties residential treatment and adequate aftercare (i.e. sober living environments) are available to only about 30% of the Prop. 36 caseload.

As originally passed, Proposition 36 projected an annual enrollment of 32,000 individuals. Today, the caseload figure is almost 40,000 and is projected to increase to 43,000 before the end of this year. The newly-passed measures for improving Prop. 36, which CADPAAC supports, include court authority to impose jail sanctions for non-compliance, mandatory drug testing, increased judicial monitoring and tailored treatment. But all of these reforms come with a price tag, and counties cannot be expected to implement these measures without adequate funding beyond the current allocation. In

other words, we should be talking about \$210 million annually to support Prop. 36, not \$120 million or even \$145 million. Otherwise, defendants will not be able to receive the appropriate levels of treatment for which they are assessed, and treatment success rates are likely to decline. Adequate funding, on the other hand, will result in more individuals having access to treatment, more defendants successfully completing treatment, and even greater savings to the state.

*Thomas Renfree, Executive Director
CADPAAC*