

Substance Abuse and Child Welfare/Neglect

In Oklahoma, as well as nationwide, substance abuse is a contributing factor to child abuse and neglect.

- ◆ **Nationally, substance abuse and addiction contributes to seven of 10 cases of child maltreatment and accounts for some \$10 billion in government spending on child welfare.**
- ◆ **The number of abused or neglected children in America has more than doubled, from 1.4 million in 1986 to 3 million in 1998.**
- ◆ **Children with substance-abusing parents are three times more likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected than children of parents who are not substance abusers.**
- ◆ **Abused or neglected children are much more likely to engage in serious and violent delinquency, and are at higher risk for drug use, poor academic performance, teen pregnancy, and emotional and mental health disorders.**

Early intervention is vital. If we can treat the addiction early enough, we can stop the cycle of abuse—whether the abuse is substance abuse, child abuse, or both.

- ◆ **Every \$1 invested in treatment yields up to \$7 in reduced crime-related costs. Savings are 12 to 1 when health-care costs are included.**
- ◆ **Treatment reduces drug use by 40-60 percent; decreases crime by 40-60 percent; and increases employment prospects by 40 percent.**
- ◆ **Treatment of addiction is as successful as treatment of other chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma.**
- ◆ **Most importantly, treatment returns the individual to productive functioning in the family, workplace and community, and helps families break the cycle of addiction.**