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**OKLAHOMA AWARDED \$11.9 MILLION TO TREAT ADDICTION:
METHAMPHETAMINE ABUSE TARGETED**

Oklahoma has been awarded an \$11.9 million federal grant to provide substance abuse treatment to men and women leaving jail or prison who have a history of addiction, with an emphasis on methamphetamine addiction.

The award was presented to Gov. Brad Henry by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and will provide the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services with funding over the next three years to develop new and diverse partnerships to address substance abuse throughout the state.

ODMHSAS Commissioner Terri White said the three-year goal of the program is to assess individuals exiting Oklahoma's criminal justice system – or who are on probation or parole – with substance abuse-related problems to determine the need for treatment and/or recovery support services; provide those with such needs the opportunity to choose a provider of treatment and/or recovery support services; and engage them in appropriate services that encourage a healthy lifestyle free from substance abuse and crime, helping them reintegrate into the community.

“Nationally, Oklahoma ranks first in incarceration of females and fourth for incarcerating males,” White said. “Oklahoma’s rate of substance abuse admissions for treatment of primary methamphetamine or amphetamine use was double the national rate in fiscal year 2006.”

The grant will provide people who are seeking drug and alcohol treatment, with a special emphasis on those being released from jail or prison, with vouchers allowing them a greater range of choice in selecting services they believe will best meet their needs.

Caletta McPherson, deputy commissioner of substance abuse services at ODMHSAS, said the goal is to add a number of faith-based, tribal and community-based organizations providing treatment and recovery support services to the state's service network by the end of the three-year grant period.

Receiving the grant is good news for Oklahoma, she said, citing the tremendous need for substance abuse aftercare for those leaving jails or prisons, or on probation or parole. People exiting the criminal justice system face problems of unemployment, transportation, housing, relationship and family issues, and need for educational services, she added.

“This grant will help significantly in that it will at least help people get on – and hopefully stay on – the path to recovery from addiction.”

White said the ATR grant will complement Oklahoma's drug court program, which also serves people involved in the criminal justice system, and is “definitely a step in the right direction” in terms of providing additional substance abuse services to Oklahomans in need.

“The reality, however, is that a huge treatment gap still remains,” she said. “In fiscal year 2006, for instance, our agency provided substance abuse services to 18,408 people. This may seem like a large number of people, but compared with the more than 243,000 Oklahomans who need substance abuse services, clearly there is a huge gap.”

Nationally, 18 states, five tribal organizations and the District of Columbia received three-year ATR grants, which are administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma also received an ATR award.

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