

Recovery AT Work

MARRCH Position Paper: Medication As Part Of A Total Treatment Program

Some drugs have proven effective in helping chemically addicted individuals move toward recovery, but no drug available today offers the silver bullet that cures all the ills of chemical dependency, according to the Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH).

MARRCH is a statewide association of agencies and professionals dedicated to the treatment and recovery of individuals who abuse alcohol and drugs. It is the authoritative voice for chemical dependency treatment in Minnesota.

In addition to drugs required to treat co-occurring mental illness or existing biomedical conditions, data from MARRCH agencies confirms indicates that there are both time-tested and newer drugs that have proven effective in the treatment of addiction.

Some examples of medications used directly to help with addiction are:

- Antabuse. A medication that alters the metabolism of alcohol in the body making it impossible for one who is taking the drug to drink without experiencing severe discomfort, including nausea, vomiting and headaches.
- Revia. This medication is used to treat heroin addiction and several studies found it to be very useful in the treatment of alcoholism as well. Revia makes alcohol feel less stimulating. It also seems to have anti craving properties.
- Naltrexone. This is an opioid antagonist which blocks the euphoria experienced by ingesting opiate products. It also has been approved by the FDA for use in relapse prevention for alcoholics.
- Methadone and Buprenorphine. Both medications have been rigorously tested and are used for the treatment of narcotic withdrawal and dependence.

MARRCH supports the use of appropriate pharmacology in the treatment of substance abuse and addiction. However, no currently available drug has been proven effective except as an *adjunct* to psychosocial or cognitive-behavioral treatment.



MARRCH is the authoritative resource for input on policies and programs promoting chemical health in Minnesota. Contact MARRCH at 1000 Westgate Drive, # 252, St. Paul, MN 55114. Phone: 651-290-7462. MARRCH@Ewald.com

