2010 Research at Andrews

Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/researchbrochure

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/researchbrochure/2

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Annual Research Brochure by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact trubtsn@andrews.edu.
Drug Abuse Policies and Treatment Efficacy

Advocating prevention and treatment accessibility

Drug abuse and its extensive, negative impacts are pressing problems in today’s society. For most of his career at Andrews University, Duane McBride, director of the Institute for Prevention of Addictions, chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and research professor of sociology, has been addressing that problem in his research. In the past, he has researched juvenile delinquency, AIDS infection of IV drug users, the efficacy of state and federal drug legislation, and the role of public health institutions in prevention and treatment programs. McBride, long-time chair of the Berrien County Board of Health, has found that public health organizations are effective avenues for providing treatment of drug abuse and offering educational programs designed to prevent substance abuse. One of his recent papers, “Reflections on Drug Policy,” outlines a brief history of drug policy in the United States and analyzes different approaches to treatment, while advocating prevention and diversion to treatment instead of incarceration.

His recent projects address current drug policies and their effects. The first project, funded by the National Institute of Justice, focused on the impact of state laws on reducing the number of small toxic laboratories used to cook methamphetamine. Many states have recently passed legislation requiring identification for anyone wishing to purchase certain over-the-counter medicines containing pseudoephedrine. Home labs often use large quantities of the ingredients in these medicines to produce the illegal drug methamphetamine. These home labs have a damaging effect on communities, including the physical danger of an unstable lab blowing up and the toxic effects of harmful chemicals on the environment. These “small toxic labs” are also accompanied by increased rates of child abuse and an increased incidence of violence and identity theft, as well as harmful consequences of the drug itself.

States have tried a number of ways to counteract these problems, such as limiting the quantity of medicine that can be purchased, requiring identification and monitoring each purchase. McBride’s research data indicates that methods of requiring identification combined with monitoring and regulating purchase of over-the-counter medicines containing pseudoephedrine leads to the most noticeable decrease in home labs. This evidence supports the conclusion that monitoring and regulation programs are most effective when all purchases are documented at one centralized location, instead of collected and kept in individual stores. A qualitative component of this project led by Curt Vanderwaal, chair of the Department of Social Work, found that law enforcement officials and pharmacists preferred regulation and monitoring over criminalization.

The second project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded Substance Abuse Policy Research Program, focuses on the impact of drug abuse treatment made available through Medicaid, particularly treatment available to African-Americans. The current analysis explores the availability of ancillary/transitional programs, such as transportation to and from treatment and childcare, as well as programs to transition users back into the community. The study found treatment programs that accepted Medicaid provide greater access for African-Americans, because the programs are also more likely to provide supplementary programs that help patients stay in treatment. Often, African-American women patients in court-ordered treatment do not have childcare or transportation to the facilities. Drug treatment is often seen as secondary to these needs and many patients drop treatment because of these issues. When these supplementary services are available, the programs see increased retention and smoother transitions to the community. Additional post-treatment transitional programs, available through Medicaid, further a successful outcome. In both of these projects, McBride worked with an Andrews alumnus, Yvonne Terry-McElrath. McBride works hard to include students in his projects, which gives them greater access to strong graduate programs and future careers in research.