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CONTACT: Laurie Fink or Julie Moriarty,  
202-338-8700, Cell: 202-302-4974

**FIRST OF ITS KIND SURVEY OF PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN RECOVERY FROM  
ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ADDICTION FINDS  
IT IS DIFFICULT TO GET NEEDED HELP**

Report comes as advocates gather for national summit this weekend to build public support and promote policies that aid recovery from addiction

(Washington, D.C.) - One in two Americans in recovery from the disease of alcohol and other drug addiction reports that it is difficult to get the help needed to recover, according to a new first-of-its-kind national survey. Researchers spoke with 500 recovering people and family members across the nation to get an unprecedented look at the people who are overcoming addiction-the face of recovery in America.

The survey, conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., comes as advocates from every region of the nation gather for a summit in St. Paul, Minnesota, this weekend to start building a campaign to promote policies at the local and national levels that will promote recovery from addiction.

Families who seek recovery from addiction face a number of significant barriers that prevent them from getting the help they need. The barriers include lack of insurance, discrimination, fear of social embarrassment or shame, and the cost and availability of treatment, the survey found.

"We have an opportunity to help millions of Americans recover from alcohol or other drug addiction by knocking down obstacles that block people from getting help when they need it," said Jeff Blodgett, coordinator of the Alliance Project, a resource center for recovery advocates nationwide. "When recovery happens, it has a powerful and positive impact on all family members-especially children who often are harmed the most from addiction and have the most to gain when a parent or other family member finds recovery."

At least 14 million Americans - nearly 8 percent of the population - are addicted to alcohol, and many more suffer from other drug addiction. Further, one in four children under age 18 is exposed to a family member with the disease. Yet, millions of Americans are in successful recovery.

The survey found that people in recovery mirror America in many ways. There is similar representation in age and race and in white-and blue-collar jobs. And like all families, one-third of those in recovery have children in their home. A few slight differences do exist, such as a larger representation of men.

"The face of recovery looks like the face of America," said Allan Rivlin, senior vice president of Hart Research, and lead researcher on the project. "The disease of drug and alcohol addiction-as well as recovery- touches the young and old, rich and poor, and all races and religions. It's an equal opportunity disease."

As highlighted in the survey, many barriers to recovery exist. Those surveyed said the biggest obstacles to getting help are:

- Denial of the problem (60 percent)
- Embarrassment and shame (40 percent)
- Cost of treatment or lack of insurance (27 percent)
- Fear of being fired or discriminated against (19 percent)

Recovery from addiction is an ongoing process, and at least one reoccurrence or relapse is part of that process for nearly half (47 percent) of recovering families, according to the survey. At the same time, more than 33 percent of those in recovery report they have been in recovery more than 10 years.

"Recovery has changed the lives of millions of Americans dramatically for the better," Blodgett said. "Recovery happens. It is real. Families who experience recovery are the living proof."

Family members and those in recovery are eager to share their experiences, the survey found, and believe it is important for the American public to see that tens of thousands of people recover and get well each year.

"People in recovery are all around us-they are our neighbors, teachers, clergy, coworkers, and family members," Blodgett said. "America needs to see this face of recovery so other families can achieve the blessings of recovery. But to do so we must knock down barriers, end discrimination, and devote necessary resources so people can get the help they need."

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*Methodology:*

*The survey in the recovery community included 250 people in recovery and 250 family members. More than 10,000 calls were made to reach these low-incidence populations. The survey was conducted August 2 to 22, 2001, by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.*

*Other Source of Statistics: Special Report on Alcohol and Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, June 2000*