

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

What is substance abuse treatment in the federal probation and pretrial services system?

Substance abuse treatment is a tool that helps U.S. probation and pretrial services officers supervise, or monitor, defendants and offenders in the community. This treatment, which includes urine testing and services such as counseling and detoxification, is provided to persons who abuse illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or alcohol. These individuals either are on probation, on parole, on supervised release after being in prison, or under pretrial supervision while awaiting a court appearance. Treatment is ordered either by the U.S. district court or by the U.S. Parole Commission as a condition of releasing these persons to the community.

How does substance abuse treatment help officers carry out their supervision responsibilities?

Treatment gives officers the means to directly address individuals' alcohol or drug abuse. For offenders under post-conviction supervision, treatment helps officers enforce the conditions set by the court or Parole Commission, control the danger defendants and offenders may pose to society, and promote law-abiding behavior. For defendants under pretrial supervision, treatment helps officers reasonably assure that these persons appear in court and that society is protected from harm. The Substance Abuse Treatment Program provides the framework for supervising persons with drug problems.

What is the Substance Abuse Treatment Program?

Administered by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts since 1979, the Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) is a national program that guides U.S. probation and pretrial services officers in identifying and treating the substance abusers under their supervision. The program's goal—to promote abstinence from drugs—is achieved through close supervision, drug testing, and appropriate treatment. The SATP enables officers, some of whom are substance abuse specialists, to supervise substance-abusing defendants and offenders in the community and to ensure public safety while doing so.

What are substance abuse specialists, and what do they do?

In 1983, the U.S. probation and pretrial services system created specialist positions to provide intensive supervision to substance abusers. This step allowed districts to set up specialized caseloads to meet the demands these particular

cases generate. Specialists are senior officers whose job is to oversee and manage the SATP in their offices. They oversee contract treatment services to ensure that contractors deliver the services required. They may supervise a caseload or may just monitor contracts. They serve as experts in confronting substance abuse and intervening to provide appropriate correctional treatment, training and directing their fellow officers in substance abuse matters.

How do officers identify substance abusers?

There are several ways. Defendants or offenders may simply tell their officers that they have a substance abuse problem. Repeat offenders may have been identified previously as drug users. Or, officers, who are trained to look for the physical and behavioral signs of substance abuse, may determine that a person has a problem. Officers may identify these persons through information in records and reports (including information from state and local law enforcement agencies), interviews with the individuals and their families, or drug testing. Also, many officers use formal evaluations and testing methods to screen for substance abuse. One important consideration in identifying substance abusers is whether they also suffer from mental health problems. These are "dual diagnosis" cases and require officers to develop supervision plans that address both problems.

How many individuals are receiving substance abuse treatment?

As of December 30, 1999, more than 35,000 persons under the supervision of U.S. probation and pretrial services officers were receiving substance abuse treatment. This was 30 percent of the total number of post-sentence cases and 20 percent of the pretrial cases.

How is substance abuse detected?

Officers use breathalyzers to test for alcohol. They use urinalysis to test for drugs. Urinalysis can be ordered by the court or the U.S. Parole Commission. Officers also may use it periodically when an individual's behavior indicates that he or she may be using drugs. Testing usually is unscheduled or random. The person has less than 24 hours' notice that a specimen will be collected. Urinalysis is a useful tool to deter the recreational drug user as well as the long-time drug user.

How is drug testing accomplished?

The Administrative Office contracts with a national laboratory to test urine specimens for the presence of drugs or their metabolites. The laboratory routinely tests for five major categories of drugs: opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine, and marijuana. Under the contract, the laboratory also provides specimen collection supplies to the probation and pretrial services offices, performs tests to confirm positive results, and furnishes expert testimony or affidavits if necessary for court proceedings.

How often are persons under supervision required to submit specimens and undergo treatment?

Requirements vary, depending on the individual's compliance with supervision conditions. National policy established a "phase" system, which sets minimum standards for the number of specimens and counseling sessions required monthly. If specimens are negative and counseling sessions go well, the number of urine collections and sessions required decreases over time. The phase process, with its gradually decreasing requirements, takes about a year to complete.

Do officers use other methods to check for drug use?

Yes. Some probation and pretrial services officers have on-site urine testing equipment. Some use hand-held drug testing kits. Some have adopted the sweat patch, which is a bandaid-like device that tests perspiration for the presence of drugs. In addition to mechanical methods to detect drug use, officers rely on observing defendants and offenders at work, at school, and in the community. For instance, during home visits, officers look for alcohol, drug contraband, and other evidence of substance abuse.

Who provides treatment?

Treatment is provided sometimes directly by officers but most often comes either from community programs that provide services at no cost to the federal government or from treatment providers who are under contract to the United States courts. The Director of the Administrative Office, under 18 U.S.C. § 3672, has the authority to "contract with any appropriate public or private agency or person for the detection of and care in the community of an offender who is an alcohol-dependent person, an addict, or a drug-dependent person. . . ." Approximately 2,000 contractors nationwide currently provide substance abuse services. Contracts are awarded through a competitive process. The specialist serves as *coordinator* of treatment services, matching the defendant or offender with appropriate treatment providers, monitoring the person's progress in and compliance with treatment, controlling treatment and testing funds, and overseeing the various treatment providers.

What services do substance abuse contractors provide?

No single treatment approach will help every person. To be able to address defendants' and offenders' individual

needs, officers require access to various types of treatment. Contractors may provide a full range of services, including

- Intake assessments
- 7 Individual, group, family, and intensive outpatient counseling
- 7 Detoxification or antagonistic treatment
- 7 Physical examinations
- 7 Psychological/psychiatric work-ups
- 7 Psychotherapy
- 7 Specimen collection
- 7 Substance abuse prevention and relapse prevention programs
- 7 Vocational testing, training, and placement
- 7 Methadone maintenance and methadone detoxification
- 7 Transportation

What are the benefits of treatment?

Ideally, treatment makes a drug- or alcohol-abusing defendant or offender better able to function in the community. It can motivate individuals to abstain from drugs or alcohol and teach them to cope without using these substances. It can influence a person to become a productive member of society rather than a drain on community resources. Treatment provides a way for officers to monitor and control defendants' and offenders' behavior. It therefore helps officers protect the public and reduce the risk that substance-abusing individuals will commit future crime--for instance, that they will resort to robbery or assault to support their drug use.

What if substance abuse continues despite treatment?

Revoking supervision may be in order. While officers should try any viable treatment approaches before initiating revocation, substance abusers must face the consequences of their actions. If these individuals continue to submit positive specimens, fail to give specimens ("stall"), give adulterated specimens, or otherwise fail to comply with court-ordered treatment, officers report such noncompliance to the court.