



# PUBLIC POLICY & INFORMATION

Promoting Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Through Advocacy and Education

## POSITION PAPER No. 14/214th Legislature (2010-11)

### ISSUE:

Establishes Hooked on Fishing-Not on Drugs Program in DEP and appropriates \$200,000 from Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund.

### BILL NO.

A-288 (Rumpf)

S-106 (Connors, L.)

### NCADD-NJ POSITION:

NCADD-New Jersey opposes this bill for four reasons. First of all, the resources in the Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction Fund (DEDR) are not adequate to fund the programs it is already required to be fund. The DEDR fund may be reduced because under certain circumstances the court may currently waive or reduce the amount the defendant is required to pay into the DEDR Fund. Secondly, Hooked on Fishing Not on Drug duplicates the purpose of numerous other prevention programs already established. For example, all of the life skills enumerated in the Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs core curriculum are skills that are already being developed in prevention programs throughout the state. Thirdly, there is no need to divert money from life-saving initiatives to fund this particular program. Municipal Alliances can already chose to use their money to implement this program. And fourth, Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs is not listed on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration’s registry of evidence based programs.

N.J.S.A. 2C:35-15 was enacted to enhance and coordinate efforts designed specifically to curtail drug-related offenses, which would lead inexorably to a reduction in the rate of crime generally and are therefore decidedly in the public interest. N.J.S.A 2C-

351-15© establishes priorities among recipients of DEDR funds. Those priorities are as follows:

- (1) The Alliance to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and its administration by the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse;
- (2) The “Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Program for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Disabled”;
- (3) The Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey and,
- (4) Other alcohol and drug abuse programs.

The state cannot afford to siphon money from other alcohol and drug abuse programs to fund Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs. Funding for the currently established programs to treat individuals with a drug or alcohol use problem, and thus reduce crime, is sorely lacking, which leaves thousands of state residents without the treatment necessary to address their disease, including 9,400 school-age children.

Addiction is a treatable chronic disease, which has been identified in about 9 percent, or over 800,000 of the general population in New Jersey<sup>1</sup>. Yet only about 5-7 percent of those identified are ever treated in the specialty treatment system, and about 42% (9,400 of whom were school-age children) who tried to get help were turned away because of cost, insurance barriers, or lack of capacity<sup>2</sup>. Money that is not used by the first three priorities established by NJSA 2C:35-15 should be used to increase capacity for addiction treatment, which will reduce crime and save the state millions of dollars currently spent on the consequences of untreated addiction.

The New Jersey Prevention Network, the Municipal Alliances of the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the Partnership for Drug Free New Jersey, and Student Assistance Counselors provide evidence-based drug and alcohol prevention programs throughout the state. These organizations



# PUBLIC POLICY & INFORMATION

*Promoting Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Through Advocacy and Education*

have established numerous evidence-based programs that encourage school -age children to avoid drug usage by providing alternative activities, help youngsters develop positive life skills, positive self esteem, critical thinking skills, civic values and family and community relations, learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and how to deal with the challenges facing them in their young lives. All of these programs prevent children from using drugs. Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs would merely duplicate these goals.

This program can be provided without hiring a director and diverting money from necessary drug and alcohol programs. The national wildlife program helps public, private and charter schools incorporate this program into their school curriculum. The Physh Ed National Fishing and Boating Education Grants initiative enables public, private or charter schools to design and deliver high quality, standards-based fishing related programming as a part of their regular, daily curriculum<sup>3</sup>.

This program may be worthwhile, but there are other ways to fund it that do not include diverting money from drug and alcohol programs that save lives, including the lives of children.

## Endnotes

- 1) Division of Addiction Services
- 2) Division of Addiction Services
- 3) Future Fisherman Foundation website

## CONTACT

Candice Singer, J.D.

Research Analyst

609.477.7013

[csinger@ncaddnj.org](mailto:csinger@ncaddnj.org)

360 Corporate Blvd.

Robbinsville, NJ 08691

609.689.0121 (PH) | 609.689.3244 (FX)

[POLICY@NCADDNJ.ORG](mailto:POLICY@NCADDNJ.ORG)