Drug addiction can lead to criminal behavior. The use of illegal drugs is often associated with murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, serious motor vehicle offenses with dangerous consequences, arson and hate crimes. Without question, drug use and criminality are closely linked.

And, so are drug addiction and crime. We need to **break the chain** that links drug addiction and crime.

However, and not surprisingly, jail alone has had little effect on reduction of drug addiction or in promoting recovery. Holding someone in jail, without access to alcohol and drug addiction treatment, with no specific plans for treatment and recovery support upon discharge, is not only ineffective, it's expensive and it's time for a change.

For many in the criminal justice system, preventing future crime and re-arrest after discharge is impossible without treatment of addiction.

FACT--DRUG ARRESTS: According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCRP) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), there were almost 1.7 million state and local arrests for drug abuse violations in 2009.

The Facts on Drugs and Crime in America

Our nation's prison population has exploded beyond capacity.

- 1 in 100 U.S. citizens is now confined in jail or prison.
- The U.S. incarcerates more people per capita than 26 of the largest European nations combined.
- Incarceration rates in the U.S. are *nine times greater* for young African-American men between the ages of 20 and 34 years.

Most inmates are in prison, at least in large part, because of substance abuse.

- 80% of offenders abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Nearly 50% of jail and prison inmates are clinically addicted.
- Approximately 60% of individuals arrested for most types of crimes test positive for illegal drugs at arrest.

Imprisonment has little effect on drug abuse.

- 60 - 80% of drug abusers commit a new crime (typically a drug-driven crime) after release

from prison.
- Approximately 95% return to drug abuse after release from prison.

Providing treatment without holding offenders accountable for their performance in treatment is ineffective.

- Unless they are regularly supervised by a judge, 60 – 80% drop out of treatment prematurely and few successfully graduate.

Source: National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)

In response to the facts stated above, with some local NCADD Affiliates leading the local effort, Drug Court programs have been developed across the country. As of June 2010, there were more than 2,600 drug courts in the U.S. More than half of these target adult offenders, while other types of drug courts address juveniles, families, DUI, and a growing number of Veterans courts.

Drug Courts are judicially-supervised court dockets that strike the proper balance between the need to protect community safety and the need to improve public health and well-being; between the need for treatment and the need to hold people accountable for their actions; between hope and redemption on the one hand and good citizenship on the other.

Drug Courts save taxpayers considerable money.

- Studies reveal average cost savings ranging from $4,000 - $12,000 per client. These cost savings are due, in part, to reduced prison costs, reduced revolving-door arrests and trials, and reduced victimization.

NCADD recognizes how grave the impact of drug use is on the preponderance of crime across the nation. But, we also know, from decades of experience, **with treatment and recovery support**, millions of people who have been in the criminal justice system can **break the chain through long-term recovery from addiction**.

"*Nine years before I was elected to Congress for the first of nine terms, I woke up from my last alcoholic blackout in a jail cell, under arrest for disorderly conduct and resisting arrest. I am alive and sober today--almost 30 years later--only because I had access to treatment for my alcoholism.*" *- Former U.S. Congressman Jim Ramstad (R-MN)*

For information on a DVD on the subject: Past These Walls: A Story of Alcohol, Drugs, Jail and Hope, featuring comedian Mark Lundholm and produced by NCADD's Richmond Affiliate, The McShin Foundation.