

**Opening Statement of
Chairman Mark Souder**

**“Measuring the Effectiveness of Drug Addiction
Treatment”**

**Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy
and Human Resources**

Committee on Government Reform

March 30, 2004

Good afternoon, and thank you all for coming. Today we continue our Subcommittee’s study of drug addiction treatment, or, as President Bush refers to it in the National Drug Control Strategy, “Healing America’s Drug Users.” It is estimated that at least 7 million people in the U.S. need treatment for drug addiction. Getting effective help to those 7 million people, and getting them to accept that help, is one of our nation’s greatest public health challenges.

Everyone agrees that we should help drug addicts get effective treatment. What is far more difficult is to find a consensus on how to measure what effective treatment is. But it is vital that we find that consensus, because in an era of tight budgets we must be able to focus our limited resources on the most effective treatment methods.

Last year, President Bush took what I believe to be a very significant step in that direction when he unveiled the Access To Recovery initiative. Beginning this fiscal year, the President's initiative will provide \$100 million to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to supplement existing treatment programs. That amount of money is intended to pay for drug treatment for most Americans who now want it but can't get it, many of whom can't afford the cost of treatment and don't have insurance that covers it. If fully funded at \$200 million per year – as requested by the President – it could help up to 100,000 more addicts get treatment. The program also has enormous potential to open up federal assistance to a much broader range of treatment providers than are used today. Through the use of vouchers, the initiative will support and encourage variety and choice in treatment and could open up and support a significant number of new options for drug users to get treatment.

Finally, and most important for our purpose today, the emphasis on accountability should help us make significant progress in the most difficult issues of drug treatment policy – finding and encouraging programs that truly work to help and heal the addicted,

as well as ensuring a meaningful and effective return on taxpayer dollars spent on treatment. Earlier this month, SAMHSA published a Request for Applications (RFA) spelling out the qualifications for programs to administer the new funds, and inviting those programs to apply. The RFA contains new performance measures designed to help us determine what programs are working for their patients, and which aren't.

I'm especially looking forward to discussing the Access to Recovery initiative with the person most responsible for implementing it, my fellow Hoosier, SAMHSA Administrator Charlie Currie. With SAMHSA up for reauthorization this year, I'm also eager to discuss with him the agency's plans for the future of drug treatment. We're also pleased to be joined by Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health, which is the federal government's pre-eminent authority on the nature of drug addiction and the science of drug treatment.

We're also pleased to be joined by a number of experts in the field of drug addiction treatment. We welcome Dr. A. Thomas McLellan, Director of the Treatment Research Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mr. Charles O'Keefe of Virginia

Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia; the Honorable Karen Freeman-Wilson, Executive Director of the National Drug Court Institute in Alexandria, Virginia; Dr. Jerome Jaffe, Professor at the University of Maryland in Baltimore; Ms. Catherine Martens, Senior Vice President of Second Genesis in Silver Spring, Maryland; and Dr. Hendree Jones, Research Director at the Center for Addiction and Pregnancy in Baltimore, Maryland. We look forward to discussing these issues with you.