



Charleston County News Release

Release Number: 3051
Date: September 16, 2009

See photo of Council presenting resolution:
<http://www.charlestoncounty.org/newsimages/daodas3.htm>

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

County Council recognizes goals with a special resolution presented to staff

September 2009 marks the 20th year that the [U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment](#) has declared September as [National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month](#). The goal is to educate the public on the nature of addiction as a chronic disease and to promote the fact that intervention, treatment and recovery can improve the lives of families who have loved ones suffering from the diseases.

[Charleston County Government](#) has joined with 98 other states, counties and cities in issuing proclamations supporting National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. [Charleston County Council](#) recognized the effort with a resolution during its Sept. 15 regular council meeting, and honored staff from Charleston County's [Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services](#).

A main emphasis of National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month is to overcome the stigma that still exists for addictive diseases.

"Although many people now agree that addiction to alcohol or other drugs is a disease, they still do not fully understand the chronic nature of this disease," said Mark Cowell, Director of Charleston County's [Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services](#) (also known as Charleston Center). "Even people who work in the treatment profession are often surprised at how closely addiction mirrors other chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes."

Cowell noted that like many diseases, addictions may also be managed but not always cured.

"Treatment for addiction does work," Cowell said. "But it is critical that patients follow up through healthy lifestyle changes such as attending support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and faith-based recovery initiatives."

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month is a call to put more focus, energy and resources into long-term follow-up, continuing care and support of patients after their initial treatment.

This month is also an important reminder that although millions of alcoholics and addicts have achieved strong and lasting recovery, there will always be a percentage of people who have set-backs.

"The most destructive stigma for addicts is how society treats them if they ever drink or use drugs again," Cowell said. "If someone with chronic hypertension has a heart attack, we double our efforts to help them manage their illness. But when someone who has gone through treatment drinks or uses again, they are often seen as failures. This makes it even more difficult for them to get the help they need."

For more information on National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, contact Charleston County's Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services at (843) 958-3300 or visit <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/Departments/DAODAS/index.htm>.