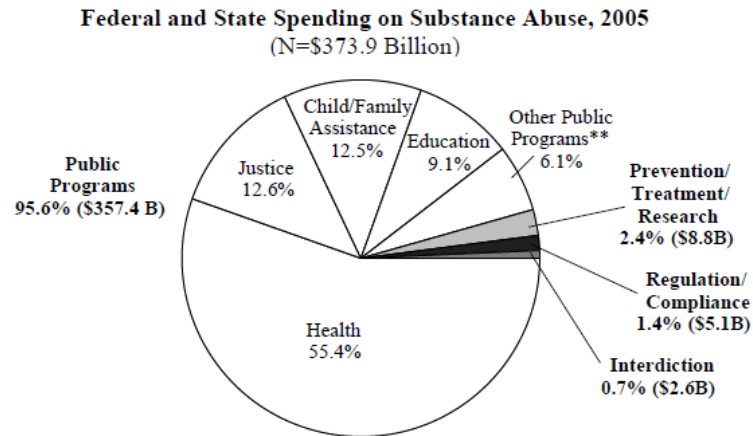


CESAR FAX: June 1, 2009 (Vol. 18, Issue 21)

Less Than 3% of Federal and State Substance Abuse Spending Goes to Prevention, Treatment, or Research

In 2005 federal and state governments spent more than \$373 billion on tobacco, alcohol, and prescription and illegal drug abuse, according to the first comprehensive analysis of substance abuse spending across all levels of government*. Only 2.4% was spent on prevention and treatment programs or substance abuse-related research, despite a “large and growing body of scientific evidence that substance use disorders are diseases for which effective treatments exist” (p. 59). In contrast, nearly all (95.6%) of substance abuse spending—an estimated \$357.4 billion—paid for the increased costs associated with substance abuse and addiction on public programs such as health care, justice, child and family assistance, and education. (see figure below). The authors recommend that governments make more cost-effective investments in 1) prevention and early intervention; 2) treatment and disease management; 3) tax and regulatory policies; and 4) expanded research.



*Spending data are from 2005 because “that was the most recent year for which data were available over the course of the study, but there is nothing to suggest that anything in this area has changed since then” (p. ii). Percentages and numbers do not add to total due to rounding.

**Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities, Public Safety, and Federal and State Workforce.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. “Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets,” May 2009. Available online at <http://www.casacolumbia.org/ViewProduct.aspx?PRODUCTID=3594d7eb-1e01-4c31-bf01-e363d92053ed>.