

# **POLKADOT – Polk County Alcohol and Drug Outreach and Training**

Submitted to: Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future, October 15, 2005  
Submitted by: Polk County Health Department and Department of Human Services  
Academic Partners: Rich Brown, MD, MPH; Laura Saunders, MSSW

## **Executive Summary**

**The Problem:** Wisconsin leads the nation in several indices of alcohol consumption. Alcohol and drug use is our fourth leading cause of deaths and hospitalizations. Annual costs are \$4.6 billion. Compared to the whole state, Polk County has nearly double the proportion of car crashes related to alcohol and more than double the years of potential life lost due to cirrhosis.

**Relevant Research:** Research shows that most individuals with risky or problem alcohol or drug use can be identified with two simple screening questions. Many non-dependent individuals decrease their alcohol and drug use after brief interventions by non-addiction specialists. Dependent individuals clearly benefit from treatment, and referrals to treatment are often effective.

**State of the Art:** For ten years, federal agencies and professional associations have recommended that alcohol and drug screening, brief intervention, and referral (ADSBIR) services be delivered general health and social services settings. Currently, few such settings systematically deliver such services. In a given year, only 21% of individuals in Wisconsin who would benefit from treatment receive it.

**Anticipated Outcomes:** The primary aim of PolkADOT is to decrease risky and problem alcohol use, and illicit drug use, by adults in Polk County and by adults who attend the nearby St. Croix Tribal Health Center, through enhancing the delivery of ADSBIR services. Anticipated outcomes for the County and Tribe are (1) increased receipt of ADSBIR services, (2) increased knowledge of federally recommended low-risk drinking limits, and (3) 25% decreases in the daily frequency of risky alcohol use and illicit drug use by those who receive interventions. Anticipated outcomes for Polk County and Tribal healthcare professionals, social services professionals, and clergy are (1) at least 70% participation in PolkADOT trainings, (2) increased knowledge about ADSBIR after trainings, (3) intention to continue delivering ADSBIR services after project completion, (4) satisfaction with PolkADOT-related collaboration with professionals of other disciplines, county government, and academia, and (5) overall satisfaction with the project.

**Program Activities:** Participating professionals will learn to apply an evidence-based ADSBIR protocol at a single two-hour training session. At follow-up visits to their workplaces, staff will consult on how to systematize ADSBIR implementation while maintaining patient/client flow. Program supports will include brochures, a syllabus, pocket-sized prompts for professionals, patient education materials, and a website for professionals and the public. In addition, professionals will be able to refer individuals for intervention, referral, and follow-up via a toll-free telephone service administered by the academic partners. A complementary media campaign will reinforce professionals' prevention and intervention messages. Sustainability will be boosted through training a local ADSBIR specialist, providing ongoing continuing education, enhancing links between participating professionals and local addiction treatment specialists, and procuring future anticipated funding. The budget request is for \$150,000 in each of three years.

**Relevance to the State Health Plan:** This project will primarily address the Plan's Health Priority of "alcohol and other substance use and addiction." It will also address the System Priorities of "a sufficient and competent workforce" and "community health improvement process and plan" and the Goal of "promoting health for all." The project is expected to serve as a model for other communities in bolstering delivery of ADSBIR services.