

Drug Policy

- Our nation's War on Drugs must not be a war on people. More humane, effective policies must be implemented. Therefore, rather than reliance on interdiction, punishment, and incarceration, highly questionable in both effectiveness and human rights, emphasis must be on primary prevention.
- The major shift in emphasis is based on the following facts:
 1. The nation continues to face pandemic drug and alcohol problems.
 2. The national policies addressing these problems have been an abysmal failure.
 3. There exists a woefully inadequate number of treatment services and primary prevention programs.
 4. Emphasis on punishment rather than treatment has only served to create a revolving door to jail, with an astronomically high rate of recidivism in our nation's prisons, and the highest rate of incarceration in the world.
- As long as persons with the disease of chemical dependency are considered bad, sinful, lazy irresponsible people who willfully get themselves into the mess they are in, as long as they are regarded as worthless, throwaway citizens, nothing much is likely to change. There is very little appreciation of the fact that their behavior is a function of their addiction. Few understand that while actively involved in their disease, people who are addicted do things that are a violation of their own value systems. They do things that go against their values and what they really believe. These facts have no appeal to those who would demonize persons who are chemically dependent and regard them as being bad people who need to be punished rather than sick people who, while needing to be held accountable for their actions, still need treatment.
- Eliminating the stigma of the disease of chemical dependency requires a major increase in support for prevention and services. The funding for this increase in support would come from curtailing the funding of the ineffective and inhumane overreliance on the criminal justice system.
- Another important consideration is an urgent need for chemical dependency treatment along with other mental health services with troops returning from battle with PTSD.