


*Letters to the Editor*



The Pincrest Tribune welcomes letters to the editor. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and all letters must be signed. Please include your complete address and phone number. Send letters to:  
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**Drug treatment is a wise investment**

Dear Editor:

In response to the article by Bethany Rundell, SMH Addiction Treatment Program marks 30 years (*Pincrest Tribune, April 3-16*), I would like to commend the hospital for its anniversary and its permanence as a hospital-based treatment program. As a former staff member of SMH's Addiction Treatment Program, I also commend Rick Wolfson, the program's clinical director, for his commitment to his patients and for his mentorship. Studies have shown that offering this type of treatment facility to the community is very much needed and should not be taken for granted. A Harvard University study found that substance abuse interventions ranked among the top 10 percent of over 500 cost-saving and life-saving medical treatments.

Also, according to the Physician Leadership on National Drug Policy, behavioral and medication compliance among recovering addicts is comparable to patients being treated for diabetes, hypertension or asthma. In fact, the relapse rate is actually lower for drug addiction treatment.

Additionally, a Rand Corporation study determined that providing treatment to all addicts in the U.S. could save more than \$150 billion in social costs over the next 15 years, while requiring only \$21 billion in treatment expenditures.

Results prove that addiction treatment is not only beneficial to the individual but to society in general. With proper treatment intervention, even the relapse rate is lower in the treatment of addiction than other maladies. Therefore, the cost of substance abuse to society goes beyond the treatment costs and includes other effects, such as crime, drug enforcement costs and other health costs.

Furthermore, a two-year California Drug and Alcohol Treatment Assessment (CAL-DATA) study found that for every \$1 spent on treatment, \$7 was saved in future costs. Yes, drug treatment is a wise investment and South Miami Hospital has been leading the way for 30 years.

Sincerely,

Martino E. Carbonell

Licensed Psychotherapist/Certified Addiction Specialist