

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

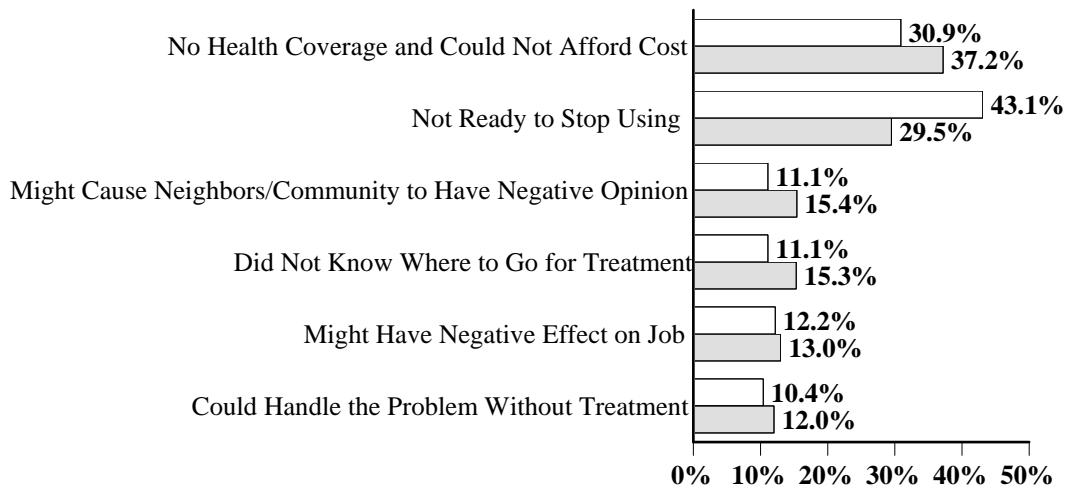
***Lack of Health Coverage and Not Being Ready to Stop Using
Top Reasons for Not Receiving Needed Alcohol or Drug Treatment***

An estimated 17.4 million people who needed alcohol treatment in the past year and 6.4 million who needed illicit drug treatment did not receive it, according to data from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Of those who were diagnosed as needing but did not receive treatment, only a small percentage also felt that they needed treatment for their alcohol (3.7%) or illicit drug (6.3%) use problem. The most commonly reported reasons for not receiving treatment among those who were classified as needing—and felt they needed—treatment were 1) not having health coverage and not being able to afford the cost* and 2) not being ready to stop using alcohol or illicit drugs. Other reasons given were not knowing where to go for treatment, thinking that going to treatment might have a negative effect on their job or social relationships, or that they could handle the problem without treatment (see figure below).

Reasons Given for Not Receiving Alcohol and/or Illicit Drug Treatment in the Past Year, 2005 to 2008 Annual Averages

(N=U.S. residents ages 12 and older classified as needing and perceiving a need for—but not receiving—treatment)

Alcohol Treatment (n=estimated 673,000) Illicit Drug Treatment (n=estimated 511,000)



*Another health coverage-related reason cited was “had health coverage but did not cover treatment or did not cover cost” (4.9% alcohol; 6.7% illicit drug).

NOTES: Respondents were classified as *needing treatment* if in the past year they met the diagnostic criteria for abuse or dependence on the substance or received treatment for the substance at a specialty facility. A *specialty facility* was defined as an inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation facility, an inpatient hospital, or a mental health center. Responses to the categories are not mutually exclusive because respondents could indicate multiple reasons.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Results from the 2008 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, 2009. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduhLatest.htm>.