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***Executive Summary***

More than 40 families of young people impacted by alcohol and drug addiction gathered at the Albany Hilton Garden Inn on September 11-12, 2015 to attend the FOR-NY Family Recovery Forum. The purpose of the program was to learn from their experiences regarding a host of issues including access to information, services and supports in order to identify challenges families are facing, develop ways to strengthen family involvement in the treatment and recovery process, and examine the need for systems change.

***Goals***

* Listen and learn from family members’ experiences regarding access to information, services, and supports
* Gather input from families to identify ways to strengthen family involvement in the treatment and recovery process
* Provide education and training about recovery-empowering language and messaging
* Create interest in developing Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) across New York State

***Participant Profile***

* 42 attendees (37 evaluation responses)
* 52.8% were aged 55 and older
* 96.9% were White
* 76.5% were Female
* 27.3% were the parent of a young person still struggling with addiction
* 33.3% were the parent of a child who entered recovery as young person
* 15.2% were the parent of a young person who passed away as a result of addiction
* 12.1% were another family member of a young person affected by addiction

***County Representation***

Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Erie, Fulton, Jefferson, Monroe, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Suffolk, Washington and Westchester.

***Participant Evaluations***

* 97.3% reported being, at least, satisfied with the overall quality of the training
* 100% agreed the meeting was well organized
* 94.4% believed the material presented would be useful in dealing with substance abuse and expected to use the information
* 88.6% reported they would recommend the training to a colleague
* 94.1% felt the information they received was useful.

***Findings***

* Families identified their most significant needs for help as:
  + Education - on addiction and on the effect of addiction on the family
  + Support - family support programs and resources, and family peer advocates
  + Training - family recovery coaching
* Additional needs identified were:
* Financial supports
* Non-judgmental support and understanding
* Navigating the systems and supports
* Access to Recovery support services
* Local family education programs and family supports
* Reduction of stigma and implications it has for family members
* Family treated as “primary client” not just as “insurance card-carriers”
* Additional trainings in Family-to-Family Peer Supports, Recovery Coaching, “The Science of Addiction and Recovery,” “Our Stories Have Power,” Narcan, suicide prevention, active listening, trauma, drug laws, and family counselling

As these findings are attributed to a white, middle-income demographic, another Family Forum developed to engage individuals with a different experience in recovery and the additional challenges of socio-economic and racial barriers throughout the process is suggested.

***Key Issues***

* The demographic of attendees was predominately white, exposing the lack of engagement of diverse communities of color.
* Families need
* Education on their own need for help and their ability to recover
* Access to the full continuum of services from information/education, detoxification to treatment facilities and recovery support services
* Access to “neutral”, non-treatment provider, specific addiction support, education, counselling and recovery supports
* Additional opportunities for family input/engagement
* Whole-family focused adolescent treatment system

***Recurring Themes***

* Family members are just learning they have a role within the Recovery community
* Families have a desire to stay connected to support systems
* More community support forums for families are needed

***Recommendations***

* Increase access to recovery supports for individuals and families:
  + Recovery Community Organizations (RCO’s) / Recovery Community Centers (RCC’s) in every county
  + Develop recovery messaging training around family recovery
  + Implement County by County resources
* Train individuals to support families struggling with addiction and sustaining recovery
  + Family Recovery Coach / Advocate
* Provide advocacy training and development through RCO’s to address:
  + Legislative matters, educational systems, medical providers, insurance carriers
* Create a Family-To-Family Toolkit by FOR-NY