



Independent Researchers Awarded Grant to Evaluate AARC Program

The University System of Maryland Foundation is pleased to announce that a team of researchers from the University of Maryland and the University of Minnesota have been awarded a three-year, \$300,000 research grant to evaluate the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC) a Calgary-based, not-for-profit treatment centre, established in 1992.

AARC is a unique program for adolescents and young adults (ages 12 to 21) who are facing substance dependency and co-morbidity disorders. AARC has provided comprehensive assessment, treatment, and recovery services to more than 500 graduates and their families to date.

The grant will allow the independent researchers to work with AARC to conduct retrospective interviews with a sample of program participants and assess the impact of attending AARC on standard measures of drug abstinence, psychosocial and academic functioning, and health. Research has advanced our understanding of how to effectively intervene with adolescents to prevent the escalation of drug problems, how to treat substance use disorder, and how to promote long-term recovery. Research studies highlight the need for comprehensive care—to take into account family factors, the unique developmental needs of adolescents, as well as understand the social context and other features of the adolescent's environment in order to effectively manage the problem.

Despite these research findings, few real-world treatment programs utilize these suggested comprehensive approaches. In-depth examination and systematic evaluation of the AARC approach can lead to a greater understanding of how evidence-based practices are implemented in a real-world setting with adolescents who are severely affected by substance use and the long-term impact of such interventions.

In addition to the goal of evaluating the AARC program, the proposed project will bridge research findings with practice by holding an educational conference on adolescent addiction and recovery in Calgary as a mechanism for promoting change at the levels of both policy and clinical practice.

The Principal Investigator on the evaluation is Amelia M. Arria, Ph.D., an Associate Professor in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health and the Director of the Center on Young Adult Health and Development at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. The Co-Principal Investigator is Ken C. Winters, Ph.D., a Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and the director of the Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research at the University of Minnesota. Jackie Smith, RN, Ph.D. (Candidate) and AARC Community Intervention Educator will be a Consultant throughout the project period.

For further information, please feel free to contact:

Dr. Amelia M. Arria – aarria@umd.edu
Dr. Ken C. Winters – winte001@umn.edu
Jackie Smith – jsmith@aacrc.ab.ca