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Eliminating Medi-Cal Drug Treatment Costs Much More than it Saves - *The Human Toll*

Name: **SIMON WALLIS**

Home Residence: **West Hollywood**

Age, family info, married, divorced, any children?

I am 33 years old and single.



What was your life like before you entered drug treatment? How did your addiction affect your life, your family?

Before treatment, I was unskilled and unable to keep a job. My friends and family had become ashamed of me, and distanced themselves from me. I was alone in the world with my disease.

The physical demands of the addiction are unfathomable, and I wouldn't wish them on my worst enemy. It becomes your only daily duty to avoid withdrawal at any cost, and that took precedence over any other responsibility, necessity, or joy. I became alone, with nothing but the dirty clothes on my back. I had to do things that I will always be very ashamed of in order to feed my addiction, but I am happy to say that because of methadone treatment I haven't had to return to that animalistic, sad, and miserable mockery of a life.

What has your life been like since you entered treatment? Referred by (doctor, courts)? Has drug treatment made your family life better? Easier? Employment?

I'm a recovering heroin addict who receives methadone treatment to curb my physical addiction. I sought treatment on my own, and it's the best choice I've made since my addiction surfaced in 2000. Methadone treatment allowed me to take a step back, and assess the life I had created, and then enabled me to start fixing my life. I've been in treatment for 5 years, and would never have been able to achieve what I have without it. I broke my daily drug-use cycle and started mending fences. I have been able to find and hold a job; to fall in love again, and re-enter my family's good graces, once again making them proud of me, rather than ashamed. I returned to college and earned my bachelor's degree. I don't like to think where I'd be today without methadone treatment. It takes many years to become drug free. Methadone allows me those years while creating positive experiences and reaching goals. These steps in the right direction lead me further from that dark time when all that mattered was the drug.

What would your life be like without your current drug treatment? Job loss (health insurance benefit, homelessness), illness, broken family, desperation.

Without methadone treatment I'd be unwilling and unable to look for, or keep, a job. I'd be in poor health with poor personal hygiene. I'd have a heartbroken and distant family. I'd have not a single possession, nor any reason to exist other than to keep taking drugs.

For more information: **www.SaveMedi-CalDrugTreatment.org**
