



A Nonprofit Organization

Contact: Diana Sylvestre, M.D. 415-271-1642
Lisa Roellig - 415-238-1801

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OAKLAND CLINIC TO PROTEST CUTS IN DRUG MEDI-CAL

Patient Activists to Rally at 14th St. and Broadway on Wednesday, Sept. 8th at Noon

Having undertaken a successful statewide campaign to gather thousands of signed petitions protesting contemplated cuts in drug treatment funding, patient activists from the O.A.S.I.S. Clinic in Oakland will conduct an informational protest rally and petition drive at the intersection of 14th St. and Broadway in Oakland, on Wednesday, September 8th at noon.

Approximately 1 out of every 8 Californians is living with addiction to drugs or alcohol and rates are on the rise, especially among young people. Although stigmatized as a moral issue, newer medical imaging techniques demonstrate that addiction is a chronic illness characterized by neurochemical changes in the brain. For many, highly effective medical treatments including methadone and buprenorphine are the key to maintaining prolonged abstinence, much as medications for asthma, high blood pressure, and diabetes are prescribed chronically to maintain health.

In addition, drug treatment is highly cost effective: studies show that for every dollar spent on treatment, up to \$7 is saved in reduced criminal activity, incarceration, and spread of infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis C. Despite these savings, California legislators are contemplating a short-sighted strategy to reduce costs by eliminating funding for Drug Medi-Cal, thereby eliminating access to care for many persons currently engaged in or needing drug treatment services.

O.A.S.I.S. patient activists, many of whom are in successful recovery because of Drug Medi-Cal benefits, will gather in downtown Oakland to educate the public about the benefits of drug treatment and to extend their successful petition campaign protesting these cuts.

“Most of us are living proof of the medical and financial benefits of drug treatment,” says Lisa Roellig, member of the O.A.S.I.S. Clinic’s Activism Committee. “Our Governor and legislators are ignoring the obvious: eliminating funding for Drug Medi-Cal won’t save money – it will add to our deficit and lead to increases in crime and disease transmission.”

OASIS, a community-based not-for-profit medical clinic located in Oakland, is a national leader in the care of underserved patients with serious medical conditions like addictions, hepatitis C, and HIV. Its patients and peer educators are recognized Statewide for their education, outreach and advocacy efforts.

###