



## **Real Reform New York FACT SHEET: *Expanding Drug Treatment***

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### **Expand drug treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration for diverted low-level offenders.**

Community-based drug treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration should be expanded substantially. A 1997 study by the RAND Corporation (a nonprofit research organization) found that treatment is fifteen times more effective at reducing crime than mandatory minimum sentencing. **Offering effective community-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration under the Rockefeller Drug Laws would cut crime, save taxpayer money, and help people, families, and communities.**

Community-based drug treatment presents an effective, efficient and humane alternative to the current Rockefeller Drug Laws that would save New York taxpayers millions of dollars a year and help cut crime. There are over 4,300 drug law violators locked up in New York State prisons for possession alone, costing New Yorkers an estimated cost of \$137,000,000 million per year. Incarcerating one person costs the state approximately \$32,000 per year, but community-based treatment works better and costs far less, averaging \$18,400 per year (for residential treatment).

#### **Community-based drug treatment helps to keep families and communities intact.**

Approximately 66% of individuals serving time under the Rockefeller Drug Laws are from New York City, while two-thirds of state prisons are over three hours by car from the city. Sufficiently expanded treatment options, especially outpatient treatment, would allow offenders to stay in their own communities with their families. A landmark California study found that for every dollar invested in treatment, 7 dollars were saved in avoidable costs, resulting in approximately \$1.5 billion in state savings. More recently, a study from Texas found even more savings – for every dollar invested in treatment, 9 was saved in avoidable costs.

**Numerous polls show the public supports effective alternatives to incarceration for low-level drug possession offenders.** In a Zogby International poll, 74% of those polled overwhelmingly supported treatment over incarceration for such people. Another survey conducted by the Open Society Institute found that 63% of Americans saw drug abuse as a public health problem and not a criminal justice problem.