

TO: GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
MEMBERS OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE

FROM: LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTITY

RE: GOVERNOR'S MAY REVISE: ELIMINATION OF DRUG MEDI-CAL

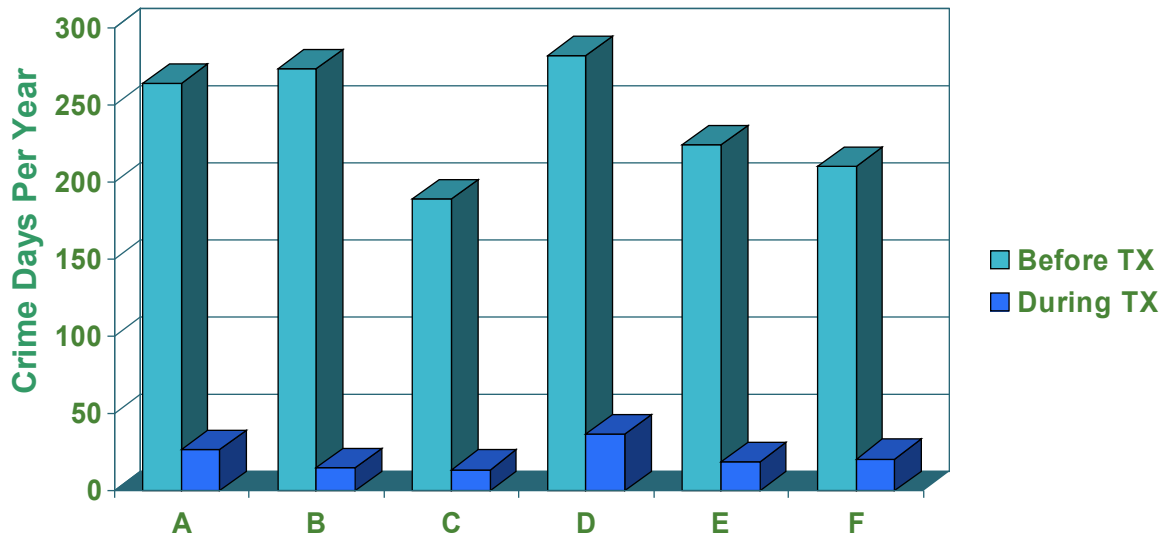
DATE: MAY 18, 2010

I am writing to urge you to reject the Governor's proposal to eliminate most of the Drug Medi-Cal program. This program saves the state hundreds of millions of dollars by keeping people from using drugs, committing crimes and hurting others. The impact of the closure of the network of clinics will have an immediate negative fiscal impact on county jails, state prisons, local police and sheriff work load, probation and parole, hospital emergency rooms, and foster care programs as well as public health programs. When drug addicts leave treatment, they relapse into illicit drug use extinguishing their ability to function as parents, employees and taxpayers.

The science tells us that opiate addicts commit on average about 235 crime days per year when not in treatment. That number is significantly reduced to just about 25 crime days per year on average for people in methadone treatment. (See attached) We know that of the approximately 40,000 people receiving methadone drug treatment services, 80% of them will relapse within one year. These individuals will seek illegal drugs such as heroin or other illegal prescription opiates and will commit crimes to fund their addiction. Law enforcement understands the direct and dramatic line between medically assisted treatment such as the Drug Medical Narcotic Treatment programs and lowered crime rates and law enforcement costs.

Our state cannot afford to increase crime and the need for more jail and prison beds at a time when we are experiencing deep cuts in funding to our available resources. This is one of the most short-sighted and wasteful use of state dollars. We urge you to reject the proposed elimination of the Drug Medi-Cal program in the interest of preserving the public safety of our communities.

Crime Among 491 Patients Before and During MMT at 6 Programs



Adapted from Ball & Ross - The Effectiveness of Methadone Maintenance Treatment, 1991