



May 12, 2017

Dear State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Director:

Last month your agency received the first installment of the new Opioid State Targeted Response (Opioid STR) grant funding. As you fine-tune your strategic plan for these funds, we ask that you invest some of these funds to develop an ongoing infrastructure that allows recovery housing to be available as an essential resource for helping individuals achieve long-term recovery.

Access to a stable living environment is fundamental to a person's health and well-being. Recovery housing is a vital part of the continuum of housing and treatment options for individuals with substance use disorders. Recovery housing gives residents a voluntary, safe, affordable, and substance-free living environment in the community and provides connection to peer supports, recovery programs, and community-based resources that help to stabilize early recovery. Research shows that recovery housing residents have decreased substance use and incarceration rates; they also have increased income and improved family and social functioning, psychological well-being, and quality of life.

Until recently, there was no standard mechanism for ensuring quality across recovery housing programs. However, in 2011, the National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR) developed an extensive set of quality standards for recovery residences. Government support is critical to ensuring the availability of quality recovery housing options, specifically NARR-certified homes and Oxford Houses.

State Substance Abuse Authorities (SSAs) can support the implementation of the recovery housing quality standards in a variety of ways:

- (1) Create or support an existing NARR affiliate in your state: [NARR state affiliates](#) are responsible for certifying recovery residences;
- (2) Provide technical assistance: Help recovery residences to build capacity and a strong statewide network to share information and resources; and
- (3) Prioritize funding and/or referrals to NARR-certified homes and Oxford Houses: Encourage the adoption of recovery housing quality standards by making the receipt of state and local funds and/or referrals from licensed treatment providers dependent upon meeting quality standards. In states where the NARR quality review process is not available, policymakers should look to support recovery residences that adhere to other nationally-recognized recovery housing models.

As you implement your state's activities for the Opioid STR grant, we urge you to consider our recommendations for ways to use your grant funding that will expand the availability and quality of recovery housing in your state. For your information, we have attached an issue brief, which includes a description of how states can optimize the growth of recovery housing while ensuring adherence to nationally-recognized recovery residence quality standards.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. We look forward to working with you to guarantee that individuals with opioid addiction have access to essential recovery resources, beginning with housing that supports their recovery.

Sincerely,

Linda Rosenberg  
President and CEO  
National Council for Behavioral Health

Kevin Martone  
Executive Director  
Technical Assistance Collaborative

Dave Sheridan  
President  
National Alliance for Recovery Residences