Greetings!

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the newsletter from the TA-POM Project (Technical Assistance – Prevention Outcomes and Measurements Project). TA-POM is dedicated to helping California’s county alcohol and drug program agencies (county ADPs) and their contracted community based organizations (CBOs) provide high-quality research-based alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention services to all of our California communities.

In a nutshell, TA-POM’s mission is to help community AOD prevention services “get to outcomes” (Matthew Chinman, RAND). The companion article on this page, “About TA-POM,” describes TA-POM’s wide range of services.

This newsletter will provide timely information about research - to - practice and practice - to - research issues affecting AOD prevention practice in all California communities. We will draw on TA-POM’s network of eleven Regional Trainers throughout the state, and upon our contacts with state and federal agencies. We hope this newsletter will help county ADP agencies and their CBO providers stay abreast of developments to improve prevention practice in their own agencies, and take a hand in shaping its direction.

See page 3 for a description about this and future newsletters’ regular features.

WHAT IS TA-POM?

Technical Assistance – Prevention Outcomes Measurements, or TA-POM for short, is a network of eleven highly skilled regional trainers spread throughout the state to help county drug and alcohol prevention agencies and contractors develop and operate outcome-oriented AOD prevention programs.

Since 1999 TA-POM has been dedicated to deploying and supporting Regional Trainers (RTs) to help county ADPs and their contracted CBOs (community-based organizations) adopt effective methods and approaches for providing prevention services. This year we received a budget augmentation from CADPAAC that allowed us to expand our services and availability in each region. The augmentation was finalized in April, and as of July we are fully staffed at our expanded level and are now working vigorously to reach all counties.

TA-POM is a “program of attraction,” ready to do its work as the county ADP is ready to accept it. We are located in the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California, Berkeley. To support our emphasis on program planning, measurement, analysis of data, and use of research-based methods, our Berkeley Office staff works with our Regional Trainers statewide.

The program provides services at no direct cost to any county ADP program (including its contracted providers) requesting them. The entire program is funded through the State of California Department of Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program (DADP) and the County Alcohol & Drug Program Administrators’ Association of California (CADPAAC).

What exactly does TA-POM do?

We focus TA-POM’s efforts through the “Five Steps” for outcome-based prevention in each county’s net negotiated amount (NNA) contract with the DADP. These steps provide a simplified means to meet the combined demands of both the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (US DHHS) and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, Title IV (US DOE) for research-based prevention approaches:

Step 1. Conduct data-driven AOD problem assessments
Step 2. Set priorities locally with cultural sensitivity
Step 3. Select measurable objectives (outcomes, results)
Step 4. Use proven methods to implement initiatives
Step 5. Monitor and evaluate, and feed back the results.

TA-POM’s job is to help county ADPs meet these requirements in substantive ways that result in measurable AOD prevention outcomes and materially reduce AOD problems at the county or local community level.

What’s in it for my county?

Regional Trainers provide professional services to each county ADP agency based on that county’s needs. County needs are determined by a Core Assessment conducted by the RT with the county ADP prevention coordinator, or administrator, or both. Regional Trainers provide:

- Training and support in logic model program planning and evaluation
- Training and support for collection and use of data for prevention planning
- Training and support for strategic planning, funding, and agency organization
- Training, access and coaching for information services

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- Networking for prevention support among county ADP prevention workers and with related agencies and organizations. These services are continuing, proactive and responsive, and are intended to help county ADPs manage upcoming federal Performance Partnership Grant requirements and other changes in the offing from federal and state sources. We work with both locally-designed prevention efforts as well as proven practices. TA-POM helps county ADPs plan their own prevention initiatives and become critical consumers of “proven practices”: to make sure the practice serves the community's prevention needs, is affordable, is replicable in the local context, and will generate high levels of community buy-in.

The Regional Trainers: The folks in the field

Eleven Regional Trainers are now operating in nine regions throughout the state. Many have masters' degrees in public health or related fields and they all have many years’ experience in the field, much of it with AOD prevention work. See the back page of this newsletter to find the RT serving your county. They would love to hear from you so that we can provide the best possible service to every county in the state. The RTs’ mission is to develop long-term professional relationships with each county prevention program and to be available on a continuing basis to assist counties in all facets of outcome-based prevention.

The Berkeley Office: Who’s in the ivory tower?

Staff in the Berkeley Office provide project oversight, support, and coordination to help the Regional Trainers achieve the best possible results for their efforts. This includes:

- Standardized instruments, oversight and coordination for the Regional Trainers to assure consistency, timeliness and support for the RTs working in the field.
- Assistance with information and research requests, particularly involving help with internet searches.
- Standard methods and instruments for TA-POM operations, and identification of county ADP needs for methods and measurements to pursue local prevention policy and program objectives.
- Liaison with the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, CADPAAC Prevention Committee, and other state agencies and statewide organizations to focus state agencies on helping county ADPs provide effective outcome-based programs.

July saw the addition of two important people to the Berkeley Office staff: Allyson West, an information specialist, and David Kattari, an analytic methods and measurement specialist. Allyson will help RTs and counties obtain information from various websites and libraries about AOD prevention research and applications. David will address data and evaluation issues by simplifying documentation, data collection, intervention methods, and measurement tools. He will design the overall TA-POM project evaluation and will create a user-friendly “tool kit” of environmental measurements. Sarah Calhoun remains the Associate Director (primary duties are to coordinate the RTs), Marie Frank remains our indispensable Administration Associate and Fried Wittman remains Project Director. Our “ivory tower” is on the second floor of an old Victorian house located next to a lumber yard.

Where do I start?

No special preparation is needed to receive our services. On page four of this newsletter, locate your county and contact the appropriate regional trainer. We’d like to get to know you and begin working with you on the “Five Steps” at the level that works for you.
Regular Features of This Newsletter

HOT TOPICS. This month’s Hot Topic is information about this newsletter. In the future, this space will be devoted to highlighting scientific aspects of prevention policy issues that are currently challenging county ADP agencies regarding outcome-based prevention. Examples: (1) continuing compliance with Synar requirements to avoid federal sanctions for increasing tobacco sales to youth; (2) policies and procedures for recognizing competence in the prevention workforce; (3) modifications of proven practices to respond to community conditions. We encourage county ADPs and their CBOs to let the Regional Trainer or the TA-POM Newsletter editor know what Hot Topics they would like to see discussed.

FEATURE ARTICLE. This month’s Feature Article is about TA-POM’s new level of activity to meet county ADP needs for support to develop outcome-based prevention. Future articles will focus on areas where outcome-based community-level AOD prevention needs further development. Examples: (1) Data collection, management, and uses for prevention planning and evaluation at the county and community level; (2) Program planning and evaluation methods (logic model planning responsive to grassroots conditions); (3) Understanding the difference between “applied-science” and “laboratory-science” and the significance for adoption of model practices (replication), locally-designed prevention (innovation), and their combination; (4) Developments at the state agency level affecting local AOD prevention.

PREVENTION IN ACTION. Prevention in Action provides an outstanding example of a replicable prevention program or policy that has produced a significant reduction in AOD problems, or performs well in keeping AOD problems out of the settings, circumstances, communities or groups that are the subject of the prevention initiative. RTs and county ADP agencies are encouraged to nominate examples.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHT. The County Spotlight will be a forum for counties to discuss outcome-based prevention policies and programs as work-in-progress in a California county. The purpose is to encourage county ADP programs to review their AOD prevention work with each other on a collegial basis, learning from their successes and challenges. Prevention science (like all other science) is primarily a process of discovery, refinement, and incremental improvement overtime. County ADP agencies are encouraged to volunteer, and to respond positively if approached by their RT, to take a turn in the spotlight.

FEATURED WEBSITE. Improving access to research-based information services is a major element of TA-POM services. The internet is an astounding resource that is getting better (more accessible, more useful information, greater volumes of material to review) but also can be difficult to navigate. To help “cut through the clutter” (Paul Brower, DADP) in each issue we will include a favorite website to that provides outstanding information about research-based approaches to AOD prevention.

LETTERS FROM READERS. What do you think? We want to hear from you! What are your concerns, requests, dreams, gripes, and items you’d like others to know about the AOD prevention field’s movement to outcomes? Each month we’ll print a letter from our readers (limit 125 words).

CONTACT US. Each issue contains full contact information for reaching our Regional Trainers and our staff at the Berkeley Office.

Featured Website of the Month: Western Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
http://www.unr.edu/westcapt/

Yes, you’ve seen it before, but we urge you to take another look. Literally teeming with helpful information, WestCAPT can help you with training events, products, identifying best practices (check out their search engine for a best practice to fit your needs!), and many helpful links.

Next featured website: the long-awaited TA-POM website!
WHO WE ARE

REGIONS AND REGIONAL TRAINERS

REGION IA
Counties: Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Butte, Plumas
Trainer: REBECCA BERNER, rberner2@csuchico.edu

REGION IB
Counties: Siskiyou, Modoc, Lassen, Glenn, Sutter, Yuba, Nevada, Sierra, Tehama
Trainer: DANIELLE CAMPBELL, dcampbell@buttecounty.net

REGION II
Counties: Mendocino, Lake, Colusa, Yolo, Sonoma, Contra Costa, Napa, Marin, Solano, Sacramento
Trainer: MELINDA MOORE, mkassocts@aol.com

REGION III
Counties: San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, Santa Cruz
Trainer: STEPHEN PURSER, spurser@uclink.berkeley.edu

REGION IV
Counties: Placer, El Dorado, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Merced
Trainer: GALEN EL-ASKARI, galen@wallonetaskari.com

REGION V
Counties: Alpine, Mono, Inyo, Calaveras, Amador, Tuolumne, Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings, Kern
Trainer: RANDY DAVIS, rad18@csufresno.edu
Trainer: JOLENE EDWARDS, jolene@mindinfo.com

REGION VI
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Trainer: LAWRENCE MESSERMAN, larrym@education.ucsb.edu

REGION VII
Counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino
Trainer: LOUISE GODBOLD, lgodbold@worldnet.att.net

REGION VIII
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