

# Data Spotlight

National Survey on Drug Use and Health

April 7, 2011

## Most Adults with Alcohol Problems Do Not Recognize Their Need for Treatment

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health,<sup>1</sup> an overwhelming majority of adults aged 21 to 64 in the United States with substantial alcohol problems—those meeting diagnostic criteria for either alcohol abuse disorder or alcohol dependence disorder<sup>2</sup>—do not perceive a need for treatment of their disorder.<sup>3</sup> The figure illustrates the magnitude of this problem.

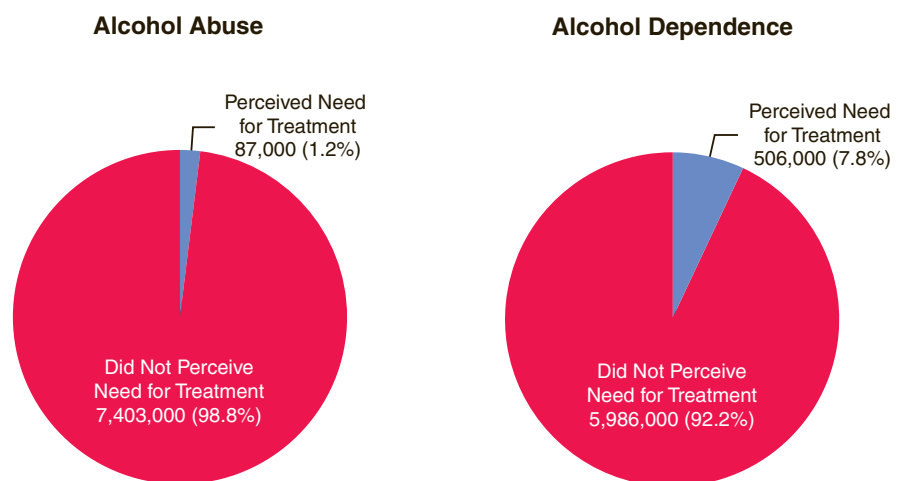
April 7, 2011, is National Alcohol Screening Day and a good time to remember that there are many tools to help individuals, professionals, and the public do a quick test to see whether alcohol is becoming a problem in their own or someone else's life. When it is, there are many pathways to help anyone with an alcohol problem, from self-help groups to more formal counseling. See <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/> for more information on sources of help for alcohol and other problems.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates are annual averages from the 2006 to 2009 surveys.

<sup>2</sup> Dependence and abuse are based on definitions found in the 4th edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV).

<sup>3</sup> Perceived need for alcohol treatment was defined as responding "yes" to "During the past 12 months, did you need treatment or counseling for your use of alcohol?"

### Perceived Need for Treatment among Individuals Aged 21 to 64 Who Meet Criteria for Alcohol Abuse Disorder or Alcohol Dependence Disorder and Have Not Received Alcohol Treatment at a Specialty Facility\* in the Past Year: 2006 to 2009



\*Received Alcohol Treatment at a Specialty Facility refers to treatment received at a hospital (inpatient), rehabilitation facility (inpatient or outpatient), or mental health center in order to reduce or stop alcohol use or for medical problems associated with alcohol use. Specialty alcohol treatment excludes treatment in an emergency room, private doctor's office, self-help group, prison or jail, or hospital as an outpatient.

Source: The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.

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