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**Teen Treatment Programs Could Be Key
to a Happier, Healthier Child, New Study Says**

***Nation's First Large-Scale Study Shows Teens Improve at
Private Residential Treatment Schools and Programs***

(NEW ORLEANS, LA – August 17, 2006) — Families who have struggled for years with the heartache of finding appropriate help for their troubled teen may find new hope in the results of a just-released study about adolescent treatment options.

According to the study, most teens with serious behavioral or emotional problems that have not responded to other treatments – such as individual or group therapy, medications and psychiatric hospitalization – improve during treatment at a private residential treatment program.

The majority of adolescents were treated for multiple problems (85.5 percent), including disruptive behavior disorders (44 percent), substance use disorders (36 percent), and mood disorder (31 percent). Results showed that teens attending licensed private residential treatment programs experienced significant improvements in all psychological and behavioral problems studied.

“In the initial findings of this multiphase study, teens whose emotional and behavioral functioning was previously described by their parents as ‘clinically’ impaired when they began residential treatment, was later described as ‘normal’ after treatment,” said Dr. Ellen Behrens, lead researcher at Canyon Research & Consulting, Salt Lake City, Utah, which conducted the study. “Perhaps even more importantly, the teens themselves later rated their own emotional and behavioral problems in ‘normal’ ranges after treatment.”

The findings, presented on August 12 at the American Psychological Association, the largest association of psychologists worldwide, are the first part of the nation’s first large-scale study of private residential treatment programs for adolescents.

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“The findings are significant in that both the parents and the students reported tremendous improvement in their communications and personal family dynamics by the time of discharge from the treatment program,” added Dr. Behrens. “In addition, both groups felt that student behaviors prior to treatment, including aggressiveness, withdrawal and rule breaking, had been diminished to ‘normal’ levels. This indicates that these changes were not only statistically significant but clinically meaningful to the family.”

“Until now, our industry has relied on anecdotal evidence and individual success stories to substantiate the outstanding work that has been done by high-quality, private residential treatment programs throughout the United States,” said Jan Moss, executive director of the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, a national organization representing programs and professionals assisting young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties. “This research demonstrates what we’ve always believed – that research-driven and evidence-based private residential programs can help turn around teens in trouble. This information will give new hope to thousands of families who have been struggling with the difficult decision of how to best help a child.”

The multiphase study was designed to determine to what degree students change over the course of treatment at a private residential treatment program and to determine to what degree students maintain these changes after discharge from the program, as measured in three-, six- and 12-month post-discharge intervals. The current results represent the first phase of the study. The final phase of post-discharge symptom measurement will be completed in summer 2006 with results available by first quarter 2007.

“We are pleased with the positive outcomes made by students at private residential treatment programs upon discharge,” noted NATSAP’s Moss. “We look forward to the release of data from the next phase of the study, which will focus on how well participants maintained their positive gains one year after discharge.”

The current study group consisted of 992 male and female adolescents, ages 13 to 18, admitted to treatment during a two-year period (August 2003-2005). Both the parents and the adolescents were surveyed at the time of the student’s admission to the residential treatment program and at the time of discharge.

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Private adolescent residential treatment programs are defined as boarding schools or programs that provide a highly structured environment, an academic component, and group and individual therapy. These programs typically are paid for by the families of attending students and generally last for three to 18 months.

Canyon Research & Consulting (www.canyonrc.com) is a privately owned company comprised of a team of psychologists and researchers who provide outcome research services to mental health programs and providers.

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs represents more than 165 programs and professionals assisting young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties. According to NATSAP, parents considering placement of a child at a private residential treatment program should look for licensed and accredited facilities with a longstanding record of safety and a licensed and qualified staff of therapists, teachers and administrators. For more information, visit www.natsap.org.

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