

KCBA Drug Policy Project – Milestones and Accomplishments

1. Sustains a coalition of major professional and civic organizations, including:

King County Bar Association
King County Medical Society
Washington State Bar Association
Washington State Medical Association
Washington State Pharmacy Association
Washington Academy of Family Physicians
Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington Osteopathic Medical Association
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
Washington Society of Addiction Medicine
Washington State Psychiatric Association
Washington State Psychological Association
Washington State Public Health Association
Church Council of Greater Seattle
League of Women Voters of Washington
Loren Miller Bar Association
Municipal League of King County
National Alliance on Mental Illness – Washington
Seattle League of Women Voters

2. **Published first major report in 2001, *Is it Time to End the War on Drugs?***, the product of separate policy task forces each headed by former KCBA presidents, and which found that our current drug policy is fundamentally flawed and is associated with numerous negative societal consequences. Based on these findings, the KCBA concluded that, rather than criminally punish persons for drug use *per se*, any state sanction or remedy should be aimed at reducing the harm directly caused to others by persons using drugs, and that unmitigated criminal sanctions should continue to be imposed upon persons who commit non-drug criminal offenses, but such offenders should have the opportunity to receive drug treatment if their crimes are related to drug addiction.

3. **Sponsored first major public event in 2001**, “The War on Drugs and Washington Courts,” a CLE program featuring Norm Maleng, state and federal judges and leading state legislators, an event that helped to propel a sentencing reform bill in the 2002 session.

4. **Drug sentencing reform legislation in 2002.**

After the release of its 2001 report and the CLE program, the KCBA sat at the negotiating table with criminal justice stakeholders, including prosecutors, judges, the defense bar, law enforcement, the state corrections department and the governor’s office, to draft a drug law reform bill. The measure passed the legislature in 2002, putting in place a completely new

drug sentencing system that gives sentencing courts vastly increased discretion to reduce incarceration and focuses much more on treatment alternatives for drug law violators. The bill was hailed as a significant shift in state-level drug policy and has led to similar reforms in other states.

5. King County AJOMP (Adult Justice Operational Master Plan), 2002.

At the same time the KCBA was working with the State Legislature, the KCBA also worked directly with members of the King County Council on a serious examination of the county's criminal justice budget, resulting in a significant reduction of the jail population and a shift of resources into treatment and social services. King County is now a showcase for the nation for diverting resources away from wasteful incarceration and into therapeutic services.

6. Sponsored second major public event in 2002, "Race, Class & the War on Drugs," a standing-room only public forum that attracted significant media coverage.

7. Worked to preserve mandated insurance coverage for drug treatment in 2003.

The KCBA Drug Policy Project's Insurance Working Group worked with the State Legislature to retain coverage for treatment in plans offered to small employers.

8. Has convened numerous other working groups to make policy recommendations, including the Prevention/Drug Education Working Group, the Juvenile Treatment Working Group, the Opiate Substitution Working Group, the Stimulants Working Group, and the Legal Frameworks Group, each of which recruited a multidisciplinary roster of professionals.

9. State-level "Treatment Expansion" funding increase of \$40 million in 2005.

The KCBA and its coalition worked directly with the Governor's office, the Department of Social and Health Services and the State Legislature to secure the appropriation of new funds for the voluntary treatment system, for which the KCBA was publicly being given credit with a special award from the state in 2006.

10. "White Paper" in 2005: *Drug-Related Crime and Disorder: Practical Policy Options* published by the KCBA Drug Policy Project's Treatment Policy and Funding Task Force, comprising state and local officials, judges, prosecutors and defenders, law enforcement, treatment professionals and scholars. The report promotes early therapeutic intervention and reduced criminal justice exposure as a means to address addiction more effectively.

11. Landmark report in 2005: *Effective Drug Control: Toward a New Legal Framework* was the product of a special task force of lawyers, public health experts, current and former law enforcement representatives and current and former elected officials. The report provides historical and cultural contexts for our current drug policies, a review of other drug policies around the world, a discussion of possible regulatory models and of federal-state conflicts in law. The report has provided policymakers and the public with a sort of "road map," outlining the parameters of a new legal framework for controlling psychoactive drugs based on the principle that the degree of control of substances should be commensurate with their respective propensities for harm and problematic use.

12. Major two-day conference in Seattle in 2005: “Exit Strategy for the War on Drugs.”

A national policy conference held in Seattle that attracted the leading scholars and policy analysts, with sessions tracking the major sections of the *New Legal Framework* report.

13. Drug Policy Speakers’ Bureau.

The KCBA is building a promising public affairs initiative which meets frequently for work sessions and includes over a dozen participants who are available to give presentations to civic, business, professional and educational organizations, along with a professional speaking coach who is assisting Speakers’ Bureau participants refine their presentations.

14. Local and national acclaim.

The KCBA has been recognized numerous times in connection with the Drug Policy Project, including the National Conference of Bar Presidents’ “Best Project of the Year” for several years running; recognition of the KCBA as Non-Profit of the Year by the Municipal League of King County largely due to the Drug Policy Project’s work. The KCBA project has also served as a model for many other state and local bar associations across the country,