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Recovery movement intensifies its approach

by Gary A. Enos, Editor



As Faces and Voices of Recovery's national field director puts it, "If you're going to bring an army of people together, you should have them fight for something."

Tom Coderre's comment to *Addiction Professional* this week gets to the heart of how traditional September events to commemorate Recovery Month are taking on a sharper focus toward timely policy issues. "We're becoming more organized," says Coderre, who this weekend will be in St. Louis for the "hub event" in Faces and Voices' national Rally for Recovery activities. "We've helped turn traditional recovery celebrations to Rally for Recovery events."

These days, a recovery advocate who goes public with a personal battle by attending one of these events also might be encouraged to register to vote, or to back a legislative initiative, or to support a new "Recovery Bill of Rights" document of principles approved by Faces and Voices' national board.

About 60 events attended by a total of 30,000 people marked last year's Rally for Recovery, and Coderre hopes the final numbers this weekend will amount to just under 80 events and about 40,000 participants.

Insurance discrimination served as the central issue last year, featuring petitions and e-mails to members of Congress regarding parity legislation. This year's focal activity is the nonpartisan Recovery Voices Count! It will feature voter education, registration drives, and other participatory activity leading up to the national election.

While recovery advocates and the groups representing them make their presence felt, professional groups in the field also are raising their profile during Recovery Month, such as through Addiction Professionals Day activities to be sponsored across the country this weekend by NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals. While professionals and recovery advocates don't coordinate these events in a formal sense, the combined effects of these efforts point to an advocacy movement growing in numbers and sophistication.