



Phoenix House
Rising Above Addiction

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Pouria Abbassi to Guide Phoenix Houses of California Through “Sea Change” in Healthcare Industry and State Financial Crisis

Former CEO of LA Convention Center aims to replicate LACC success with treatment industry leader

LOS ANGELES – Phoenix House is pleased to announce the appointment of Pouria Abbassi as Senior Vice President and Regional Director of Phoenix Houses of California. Abbassi begins his new role in the midst of the healthcare industry’s transformation and welcomes these fundamental changes as an opportunity.

“It was important for us to find a leader with a record of successfully implementing strategic change and in Pouria we have found such a person,” said Howard P. Meitiner, President and CEO of Phoenix House. “Pouria’s achievements as CEO at the Los Angeles Convention Center were indicative of his leadership capabilities and made him an ideal candidate to navigate Phoenix Houses of California through the challenges and opportunities we will face over the next five years.”

“It is exceptionally intriguing and significant to be part of a paradigm shift in any industry, but particularly in the health care industry,” Abbassi responded. “With this sea change, we have an important opportunity at Phoenix Houses of California to make a greater and more meaningful impact in the lives of our clients.”

These changes are being driven by the economic impact on state funding budgets for substance abuse treatment, as well as by the Affordable Care Act that was recently upheld by the Supreme Court. Phoenix House, the nation’s largest nonprofit provider of substance abuse treatment and prevention services, has been adapting its services in response to these challenges, focusing on clinical innovation and expansion of treatment. This is a transition that Phoenix House welcomes despite its inherent challenge.

Currently, the majority of Phoenix House’s clients are state-referred and the organization receives public funding to provide critical services to individuals who would otherwise be incarcerated or fall under the states’ care. The individual mandate will not only shift the

cost of treatment for state-referred clients from the state to insurers—it will also ensure that millions of Americans who struggle with addiction but were previously unable to afford treatment will now be able to receive those services. As a result, Phoenix House needs to adapt to this new funding model and ensure that the infrastructure is in place to accommodate new clients.

“In this environment,” Abbassi continued, “we have to be nimble, we have to implement improved clinical practices, and we need to grow our organization to respond to the growth of our client base. We also have the responsibility to continue to provide services with compassion and understanding.”

As a first order of business, Abbassi plans to solidify the fiscal base of Phoenix Houses of California as an important pre-requisite to strengthening and scaling up the organization’s trademark continuum of care for adolescents. Nearly 600 young people are served each year in three Phoenix House Academies in California, where treatment is tailored to serve teenagers who grapple with substance abuse and/or co-occurring mental health issues simultaneous to their addictions. This treatment approach has received national recognition from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

“Times of difficulty provide the best setting for organizations to succeed,” said Abbassi. “Phoenix Houses of California will reflect the prominence, innovation, and fiscal strength of this great state.”

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[Phoenix House](#) is the nation’s leading nonprofit provider of substance abuse treatment and prevention services, helping more than 7,000 men, women and teens each day overcome addiction and sustain recovery. Phoenix House has more than 120 programs in ten states: California, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, and Virginia.

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