

The Alliance for Benzodiazepine Best Practices

2023

Annual Report



Prepared By
Grants of Camelot

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A Message from the Co-founder, Bernie Silvernail



Welcome to 2024! It has been over five years since the Alliance was formed, and we are starting to see a positive shift in attitudes toward benzodiazepines.

On the educational side, several of our directors and advisors who are medical school teachers have noted that new providers are reluctant to prescribe benzos due to their high risk profile. Initially a novelty topic, there is now high demand for our benzodiazepine educational courses from prescribers and pharmacists.

On the regulatory side, the FDA has issued three warnings to prescribers about benzo risks, and is funding two major studies to establish deprescribing guidelines and to reduce benzo prescription rates. On the public perception side, our BIND paper reached over 93 million readers, two movies and two network specials focused on the dangers of benzos, and over a hundred interviews and focus sessions on this same topic were posted on social media.

We believe that established caregivers will eventually follow the evidence they are presented. This is why we continue to focus on producing peer-reviewed papers that feature BIND (see below) and the harms of benzodiazepine over-prescription. Through our affiliates, we are working to establish best practices to help those who are dependent but injured by benzodiazepines to safely stop. We currently have five medical papers in production that will continue to provide this evidence.

As you can imagine, this all takes resources. Many of you have helped us - thank you! - and a few very generous donors, an annual grant, and a government contract are keeping us afloat. We could save a lot more people from benzodiazepine injury, together if we had more resources. [Join us](#), or get involved by emailing info@benzoreform.org



Our Purpose

Vision

We see a future where there are few benzodiazepine-caused injuries.

A future where prescribers understand the limitations of these medications, and their peers and societies hold them accountable for evidence-based prescribing.

A future where patients learn the risks of using benzos before taking them.

A future where most care providers understand and can help those who have been injured by benzodiazepines.

Mission

Our mission is to reduce the harm caused by benzodiazepines and Z-drugs by making evidence-based improvements to how they are prescribed.

- We are devoted to resolving the benzodiazepine crisis.
- We teach medical professionals about the harms associated with benzodiazepines and show them safer alternatives.
- We provide tools for clinicians to assist benzodiazepine withdrawal and BIND sufferers.
- We develop and promote best practices in benzodiazepine prescribing and deprescribing.

Values

Our values guide our actions. We are committed to the following :

- Evidence guides action
- Minimize harm due to disease and prescription
- Every sufferer deserves to have their story heard
- Both sufferers and prescribers deserve respect

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Highlights

Building New Partnerships

Angela Peacock's Five Part YouTube Series

Co-founder: Bernie Silvernail

Medical Director: Dr. Alexis Ritvo

Board Members: Dr. Jolene Bressi,
Doryn Chervin, and Andora

Hightower >>>[Watch them here](#)

Five Topics Include: The Alliance overview, a doctor's perspective, pharmacist perspective, lived experience, family member, and advocacy.

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PHARMCON

Benzodiazepines: A New Kind of Pandemic

Pharmacists and board members Lori Mor and Jolene Bressi presented at Pharmcon three times in the spring of 2023. They **reached over 7000 pharmacists**, technicians, and nurses with their CME training on benzodiazepines.

PHARMCON
freeCE

7000

Reached





Research

Alliance-led Team Defines Benzodiazepine Injury: Medical Journal Article Published

Based on over 1200 cases, the research paper defines Benzodiazepine-Induced Neurological Dysfunction (BIND) as the injury that affects some 20% of those who use these medications for more than 2-4 weeks. "Long-term consequences of benzodiazepine-induced neurological dysfunction: A survey" was published by PLOS ONE on June 29.

[READ THE FULL STUDY HERE](#)

**BIND can
continue for
weeks or years
after quitting
Benzos**



Long-Term Withdrawal Symptoms

Nervousness/anxiety

Sleep disturbances

Low energy

Difficulty focusing

Memory loss

Read more on: benzoreform.org



**85% of respondents
experienced ALL of
these symptoms**



**The median amount of
symptoms reported
was 15 out of 23**



Safe Use Initiative

In 2023, the Alliance developed a partnership with a large medical system to test a program designed to reduce benzodiazepine-induced injury by reducing their prescription rate. Initiated by the Alliance, this is being done with funding from the FDA under a Safe Use Initiative contract. This 3-year partnership is possible because of the FDA's increasing awareness of the problems with long-term use of benzos. Everyone who sends in an FDA MedWatch report on their problematic benzo experience helps raise their awareness.





Social Media Impact



Twitter X:

**49,253
Impressions**



Facebook:

**22,662
Impressions**



YouTube:

**16,140
views**



Social Media
Growth

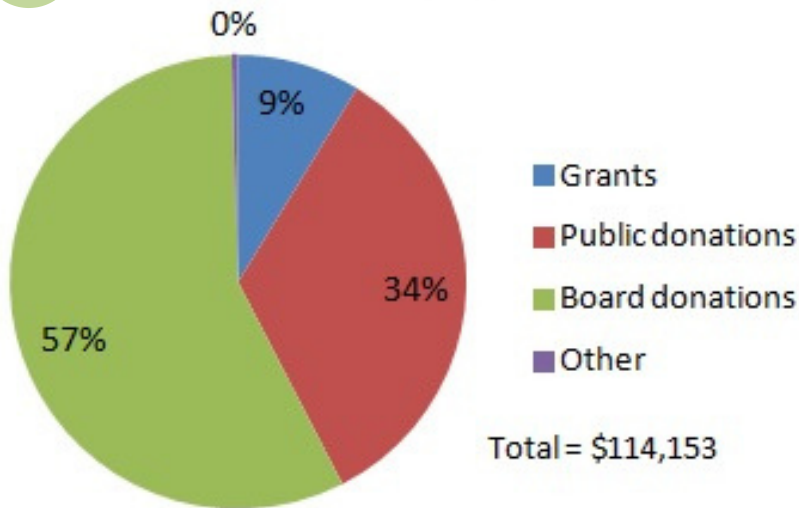
**+1150
Followers**

(Click on each icon to follow, like, and subscribe)



Financials

2023 Income

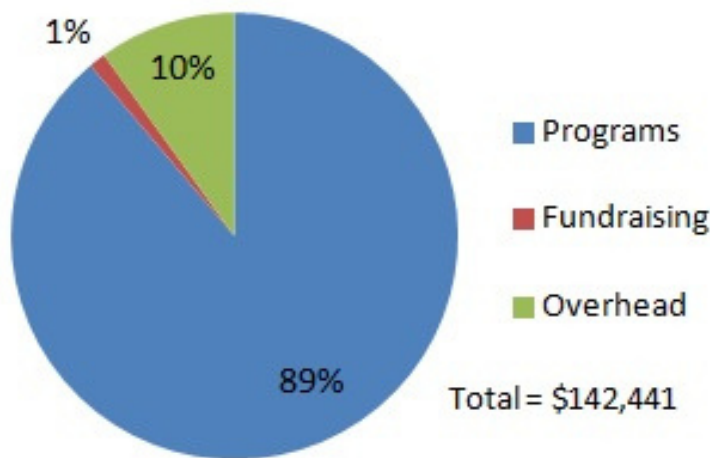


The Alliance began the year with a balance of \$64,476 and ended the year with a balance of \$36,189.

89% of our expenses were dedicated to programs, with 83% of our overhead costs due to taxes and insurance.

[View balance sheet](#)

2023 Expenses



CALL TO ACTION

We need your help in order to continue providing resources to those who need it. Please [contribute](#) or join one of our [membership programs](#).



Looking Ahead...

Researching Benzo Injury

Research is critical to changing opinion. In 2024, we expect to publish three more peer-reviewed papers on benzo prescribing and injury. With our partners, we expect to publish three additional papers on treatment of those injured by benzos.

I Wish I had Known Campaign

This social media campaign are short videos produced by individuals who were affected by long term benzodiazepine use. The purpose is to raise awareness from multiple perspectives, those with lived experience, prescribers, family members, and more. To participate please email hunter@benzoreform.org

Deprescribing Leadership Program

The Alliance for Benzodiazepine Best Practices is developing a two part program that will educate prescribers across disciplines to be Clinical Leaders in Benzodiazepine Deprescribing and Clinical Leaders in BIND Patient Support. If you are interested in learning more about this program please contact us at info@benzoreform.org.

Educating Medical Professionals

For every prescriber we educate, it is estimated that over 100 patients are saved from being injured by benzos. We will continue and hope to expand our educational programs, with a goal of 20,000 educated by 2025.



2023 Leadership



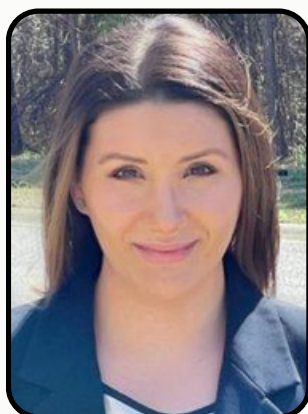
Bernie Silvernail, MS



Alexis Ritvo MD, MPH



Jolene Bressi PharmD, PMP



Lori Mor, PharmD



Judd Katz, JD, MHA, MS



Jaden Brandt, BSc.Pharm, MSc.



Chris Blazes, MD



Richard Bailey, BSC(HONS),
DPH DIPMLT, CG(ASCP), CM
CLSUP, MHGSA



Cathal Cadogan
BSC. (PHARM), PHD, MPSI