

# RECOVERY

*The official newsletter of the  
Fletcher Group Rural Center Of Excellence*



## SUMMIT RECAP

**LESSONS LEARNED  
FROM OUR SUMMIT**

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**NEW RESOURCES FOR  
PUBLIC DEFENDERS**

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## THANKS TO YOU...WE DID IT!

 Fletcher  
Group

The Fletcher Group Rural  
Center of Excellence

*by Founder and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ernie Fletcher*

Is there ever too much of a good thing? Not at our June 8-10 Building Rural Recovery Ecosystems Summit in Memphis where evidence-based best practices, heartfelt new connections, and inspiring presentations created one highlight after another—far too many to list here. That being said, allow me to recall two.

The first was a four-member discussion titled “Rural Public Defender Challenges in Accessing Recovery Services for Clients.” Described on page 3, it has spurred the Fletcher Group to launch an entirely new program providing public defenders with critically-needed resources. The second was a presentation titled “Recovery Allies: Understanding Recovery Capital and Building Recovery-Friendly Communities.” It's highlighted on page 4 for the simple reason that recovery allies—such as yourself—are so close to our heart.

But of all the great things about the summit, what I'm most proud of is the value, attention, and comfort it gave to rural providers. They can feel pretty alone sometimes, but in ways large and small the summit reinforced their importance and confirmed that, though geographically separated, they are never alone in their admirable devotion to creating a better world. We are with you always.

# LESSONS LEARNED

The Building Rural Recovery Systems Summit hosted by the Fletcher Group last month in Memphis was by all accounts a resounding success, especially considering it was our first-ever national conference.

“It definitely exceeded my expectations,” says Fletcher Group CEO Dave Johnson. “I’m particularly happy that it doubled our enrollment in SMART Recovery and created a lot of interest in Contingency Management—two very important programs that have great promise.”

“I’m sure it generated a lot more awareness than we can imagine,” said Fletcher Group Founder Ernie Fletcher who spoke at the opening and closing addresses. “I’m particularly pleased with the summit’s rural focus and everything it did to serve that population.”

Even Jennifer White, Karen Colburn and Joseph Ellis—the heavy-lifters who lived and breathed summit preparation for months and consequently knew every bump and snag along the way—were impressed.

“We learned so much!” says Colburn. “And based on the feedback and the results of our survey, it was very successful.” Ellis agreed: “Lot of lessons learned. And lots of work, too, but well worth the effort.”

“As the saying goes, it takes a village,” says White. “That’s why we want to especially thank all our volunteers, including those from the Rochester and Vermont RCOEs. We couldn’t have done it without you.”



## Survey Comments

*“Great information shared.”*

*“The networking was fantastic.”*

*“Extremely helpful in expanding my knowledge of recovery housing needs and possibilities.”*

*“Learned how to move forward with recovery housing in communities that are resisting.”*

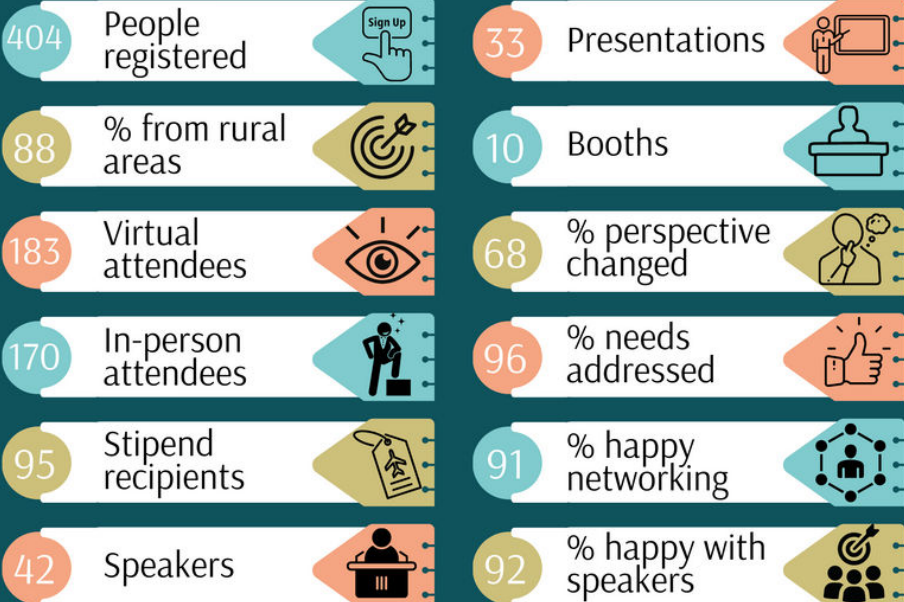
*“Learned more effective ways to use peer support and recovery home models.”*

*“Contingency management works!”*

*“SMART Recovery is a great alternative to higher-power-based options.”*

*“My work developing recovery housing was validated. I’m re-energized!”*

## By The Numbers



# DEFENDING JUSTICE

“Everyone calls me ‘Rap’,” says Jonathan Rapping, law professor at Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School and founder of Gideon’s Promise, a non-profit that partners with public defender offices across the country. “Whether urban or rural,” says Rapping, “they all have one thing in common—a lack of resources.”

Rapping was already well-known to the Fletcher Group, as evidenced by his position as a highlighted speaker at the Fletcher Group’s recent “Building Rural Recovery Ecosystems” Summit in Memphis. But Rapping’s powerful presentation and discussions with other stakeholders at the summit has prompted the Fletcher Group to launch a new program to provide public defenders with critically important resources.

## A Team Effort

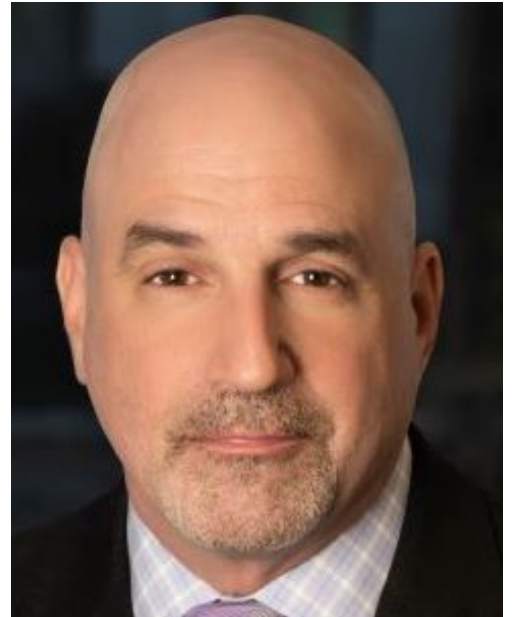
“To address the inequity in incarceration rates of those charged with drug-related offenses, we’ve decided to work with both Gideon’s Promise and the National Association of Public Defense,” says Fletcher Group Founder Ernie Fletcher. “I’ve worked with public defenders enough to know that they’re the only true advocates for those arraigned on drug charges. Our goal will be to link them to evidence-based treatments and services so their clients can end the revolving door of recidivism and start down a diversion pathway that leads instead to recovery.”

## The First Step

The Fletcher Group will start by working with the National Association of Public Defense to create training materials for teaching public defenders how to develop alternative sentencing pathways. The classes will be accessed through both the NAPD website and the Fletcher Group’s online Learning Center at [www.recovery-housing.org](http://www.recovery-housing.org). “We’ll also create a number of educational materials to present at public defense-related conferences,” says Fletcher.

## The Next Step

Once the training materials are in place, the Fletcher Group will focus on connecting public defender offices with experienced peer support specialists and social workers who can evaluate client needs and design holistic, person-centric recovery plans providing the complete continuum of care needed for long-term recovery.



## Rural Focus

In keeping with its rural focus, the Fletcher Group will be mindful of racial and geographic inequities as it works with others to provide rural defendants with the diversion opportunities, legal representation and best-practice services needed for recovery.

## Don't Miss It!

If you didn't catch Jonathan Rapping's riveting presentation at the Building Rural Recovery Ecosystems Summit, you can still watch it by visiting our Summit Web Page at [www.fletchergroup.org/2022-summit/](http://www.fletchergroup.org/2022-summit/)



Videos and downloadable pdfs of all 31 summit presentations can be found there together with a number of glowing testimonials.

## WHAT CAN ALLIES DO?

“What can I do?” No matter who’s asking—friend, family, neighbor or community member—it’s nice to have an answer that will stand the test of time. Thanks to a new book by Alison Jones Webb, we do.

“Recovery Allies: How to Support Addiction Recovery and Build Recovery-Friendly Communities” is a practical, hopeful, and research-based guide for supporting loved ones through addiction and recovery. Offering “real-world solutions, evidence-based strategies, and, above all, hope for the 23 million Americans living in recovery from substance use disorder,” the book’s been called a “godsend” by at least one reviewer who added, “Finally, a book on solutions for our national addiction epidemic. I hope allies and decision makers pay close attention!”

### All In One Place

A recovery coach, public health specialist, and certified prevention specialist, Webb has worked over 15 years in the field of substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery and recently presented at the Fletcher Group’s Building Rural Recovery Ecosystems Summit June 8-10 in Memphis. Her book provides advice for everyone, from family members (“do your homework to find houses certified by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences, even if they’re not as close to home as you’d like”) to employers (“reach out to recovery residences with employment and job training opportunities”) to those thinking of building recovery housing (“consult with people who have experience”).

### It Starts At Home

Webb’s emphasis on recovery housing syncs with the Fletcher Group’s. “Safe housing is the foundation for healthy relationships and healthy living in recovery,” she writes. “It’s a secure place for self-exploration, a place to learn new behaviors and attitudes, experiment with new ways of living, and build recovery capital. In other words, safe housing is a home.”

Webb and the Fletcher Group are also on the same page when it comes to community support of rural recovery ecosystems. “Most adults with substance



use disorder don’t receive specialized treatment like counseling, medication, or rehab,” writes Webb. “Instead, the recovery journey starts in their communities, among family and friends, here and now, with their recovery allies.”

More information is available at [www.alisonjoneswebb.com](http://www.alisonjoneswebb.com) and to watch Webb’s presentation at our 2022 Summit, visit [www.fletchergroup.org/2022-summit](http://www.fletchergroup.org/2022-summit).

