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The Opinion Pages

LETTER

In Amsterdam, Paid in Beer

Published: December 11, 2013

To the Editor:

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Re "[A City of Tolerance Has a Deal for Alcoholics: Work Paid in Beer](#)" (front page, Dec. 5):

Amsterdam's exploitation of alcoholics by paying them with beer to clean up the city is appalling and should be considered a violation of human

rights.

Under the guise of helping alcoholics, the government, by funding the program, is taking advantage of people with an illness for its own gain. This is highlighted by the Amsterdam district mayor's comment that the program is a "cleaning project" that has been far more successful than previous initiatives in reducing drunkenness in a local park.

Addiction is a disease, just as cancer, diabetes and heart disease are, that can and should be treated by trained medical personnel. And just as we would not stand for exploiting patients suffering from any of those diseases, it should not be tolerated in the case of alcoholics.

Amsterdam officials are victimizing these people, contributing to and perpetuating their illness.

JANINA J. KEAN

President and Chief Executive
High Watch Recovery Center
Kent, Conn., Dec. 5, 2013

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