NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Press Kit

Welcome to the **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence** (NCADD). This section of our website has been developed to provide a focal point for journalists and other members of the media interested in alcoholism and drug dependence. We hope the information you find here will facilitate your work and help us to fulfill our ongoing Mission of **"fighting the Nation's #1 health problem: alcoholism and drug dependence."**

NCADD is America's oldest national advocacy health organization dealing exclusively with alcoholism and drug dependence. Founded in 1944 by Marty Mann, the first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous, NCADD continues to be **the national voice** for those suffering from alcoholism and drug dependence. (For information about Marty Mann, see "Our Founder").

In addition to its national headquarters in New York City (see "Contact Us"), NCADD has a National Network of State and Local Affiliates, providing unique information and referral services as well as programs of prevention, education, intervention, treatment and recovery support in communities across the country.

FAST FACTS: The Scope of the Problem

- 22.6 million people (9.2% of the U.S. population ages 12 and older) have an alcohol or drug problem. (National Survey on Drug Use and Health--NSDUH)
- 2.4 million adolescents have an alcohol or drug problem. (NSDUH)
- 50% of adults have a family member with alcoholism. (NSDUH)
- Approximately 1 in 4 children under 18 live in a family with alcoholism, and many more live in a family with drug addiction. (NSDUH)
- Alcoholism is the 3rd leading lifestyle-related cause of death in the nation. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Alcoholism and drug dependence cost the nation over $276 billion a year, resulting principally from lost productivity and increased health care spending. (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

ALCOHOLISM IS A DISEASE:

In the United States, Benjamin Rush, MD, has been credited with first identifying alcoholism as a

"disease" in 1784. He asserted that alcohol was the causal agent, loss of control over drinking behavior being the characteristic symptom, and total abstinence the only effective cure. His belief in this concept was so strong that he spearheaded a public education campaign in the United States to reduce public drunkenness.

Elvin Jellinek, MD, of the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies, in his book, *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*, published in 1960, described alcoholics as individuals with tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and either "loss of control" or "inability to abstain" from alcohol. He asserted that these individuals could not drink in moderation, and, with continued drinking, the disease was progressive and life-threatening. Jellinek also recognized that some features of the disease (*e.g.*, inability to abstain and loss of control) were shaped by cultural factors.

Since that time, numerous studies by behavioral and social scientists have supported the assertion that alcoholism is a disease. The **American Medical Association (AMA)** endorsed the concept in 1957. The **American Psychiatric Association (APA),** the **American Hospital Association (AHA),** the **American Public Health Association (APHA),** the **National Association of Social Workers (NASW),** the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **American College of Physicians** have also classified alcoholism as a disease. In addition, the findings of investigators in the late 1970s led to explicit criteria for an "alcohol dependence syndrome" which are now listed in the DSM IIR, DSM IV, and the ICD manual.

In a 1992 *JAMA* article, the Joint Committee of the **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)** and the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)** published this definition for alcoholism:

"Alcoholism is a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, mostly denial. Each of these symptoms may be continuous or periodic."

TREATMENT:

Like other diseases, alcoholism and drug dependence can be overcome with proper treatment, prevention and more research. Millions of people achieve recovery. By increasing access to care, the costly toll on society and the burden it places on families can be reduced.

Research shows conclusively that successful prevention and treatment leads to reductions in traffic fatalities, crime, unwanted pregnancy, child abuse, HIV, cancer and heart disease. Treatment reduces drug use, improves health, improves job performance, reduces involvement with the criminal justice system, reduces family dysfunction and improves quality of life.

- **Treatment of addiction is as successful as treatment of other chronic diseases, diabetes, hypertension and asthma** (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

RECOVERY:

Today, millions of Americans, individuals and family members, from all walks of life--doctors, lawyers, housewives, teachers, pilots, nurses, etc., are living life in long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. Thank you NCADD.

NCADD SERVES:

- Individuals addicted to alcohol and drugs, and Their Families
- Children, Teenagers and Their Parents
- Government Policy Makers
- The Media
- The Medical Community
- Medical Researchers
- Public Health Professionals
- Educators
- Other National Health Organizations

SPECIAL SERVICES

NCADD Hope Line: Toll-Free: 800-622-2255

Affiliates of NCADD provide information and referrals to local services, including counseling and treatment. They also conduct community prevention and education programs. To find the NCADD Affiliate closest to you, call **800/NCA-CALL** using a touchtone phone and enter your zip code.

NATIONAL AWARENESS EVENTS

April: Alcohol Awareness Month

May: Alcohol/Drug-Related Birth Defects Week

September: Recovery Month