



FRIENDS of NIDA

July 10, 2007

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
516 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rehberg:

We are writing representing the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to ask that you consider joining the *Congressional Drug Policy Caucus*. This caucus was recently formed by Congressmen Elijah Cummings and Mark Souder following a reorganization of the subcommittee that had jurisdiction over drug policy on which they served as Chairman and Ranking Member. The Congressmen hope to continue with their commitment to drug policy-related concerns, and as such, have determined that to ensure a balanced and integrated plan for reducing drug use, the bipartisan caucus will focus on prevention, treatment, supply reduction, and law enforcement.

Although approximately 23 million Americans have a substance use disorder, the good news is that these disorders are responsive to a range of psychosocial and pharmacologic treatments. Further, research indicates that scientifically based prevention programs can drastically reduce the toll of substance use and abuse during critical periods of childhood and adolescent development. However, despite remarkable advances in research on substance use disorders, these basic health issues continue to disrupt American life, resulting in lost productivity, secondary health problems, and premature death. Compounding these issues, patients, advocates, providers and even those researching the problem continue to face stigma and discrimination not seen in other areas of healthcare, undercutting prevention and treatment initiatives.

We recognize that the 110th Congress will face unprecedented challenges in allocating budgetary resources for discretionary programs under its charge, and we urge you to help your colleagues highlight the importance of issues surrounding drug policy by joining the *Congressional Drug Policy Caucus*. Please contact Chris Davis (225-4741) in Congressman Cummings' office for more information or to join.

Sincerely,

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