

FRIENDS OF NIDA

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College on Problems of
Drug Dependence

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Dear «Salutation»,

We are writing representing the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to ask that you consider joining the Senate Anti-Methamphetamine Caucus, an important bipartisan caucus that has been designed to direct attention to the growing nationwide problems and dangers associated with abuse and production of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine is an addictive stimulant drug that strongly activates certain systems in the brain. Although it has some limited therapeutic uses, methamphetamine is easily made in large quantities in illegal laboratories and has a high potential for abuse and addiction. While methamphetamine reportedly produces short-term pleasurable effects, it can also produce life-threatening increases in blood pressure and changes in heart rhythm. With long-term use, methamphetamine appears to produce elements of brain damage that can result in symptoms similar to those associated with Parkinson's disease.

Recent Monitoring the Future data surveying 8th-12th graders showed that 4.5 percent of high school seniors had reported use of methamphetamine in their lifetime. Further, data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that 12.4 million Americans age 12 and older had tried methamphetamine at least once in their lifetimes (5.3 percent of the population), with the majority of past-year users between 18 and 34 years of age. And while methamphetamine abuse and production started as regional phenomena in Hawaii and the western continental states, it has rapidly spread eastward to urban, suburban and rural areas at a pace unrivaled by any other drug in recent times.

NIDA not only funds the surveys that allow public health officials to track the scope of the problem, it also funds an active multidisciplinary research program designed to develop effective treatments for methamphetamine addiction. We applaud the leadership of Senators Conrad Burns and Kent Conrad, caucus co-chairs, and urge you to endorse the efforts of your colleagues by joining the Senate Anti-Methamphetamine Caucus.

Please contact Jodi Peters (224-2644) on Senator Conrad Burns' staff or Peggie Rice (224-2043) on Senator Kent Conrad's staff for more information.

Friends of NIDA:

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Brain Coalition
American Dental Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
National Association of People with AIDS
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc.
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