

# Alcoholism Isn't What It Used to Be: New Findings Foreshadow Shifts in Treatment Strategies

A Congressional Briefing Sponsored by  
The *FRIENDS OF NIAAA*

*In conjunction with*  
**The Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus**

**Wednesday, October 8, 2008**  
**Noon - 2:00 pm**  
**(box lunches will be available)**  
**Rayburn House Office Building, Room B-354**

Heavy drinking and alcohol dependence are the third leading cause of preventable death and the second leading cause of disability among 18-44 year-olds in the U.S., yet only 1 in 8 persons with alcohol dependence ever seek specialty treatment. About 20% of U.S. adults drink at levels that increase risk for development of alcohol dependence, liver disease, and social disruption even though they are currently symptomatic. New research suggests that we must expand our view of what constitutes "treatment," including where it occurs and who administers it. Non-dependent drinkers respond well to brief motivational counseling and many dependent drinkers can recover with medication and brief support from primary care doctors. With continued research on medication and behavioral treatment approaches, we anticipate a paradigm shift much like what has occurred with depression (most depression is now treated in primary care). In addition, treatment that integrates addiction, physical and mental health care with disease management shows promise for treating the chronic relapsing form of alcohol dependence.

## Speakers

**Ting-Kai Li, MD**, Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, will provide an overview of the NIAAA treatment research portfolio.

**Kenneth J. Sher, PhD**, Curators' Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri, will describe recent findings on the development of heavy drinking and alcohol dependence, and how this fundamental research may lead to the development of more effective, personalized treatments.

**Mark Willenbring, MD**, Director of the Treatment and Recovery Research Division of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, will describe how research has advanced our ability to tailor treatment for patients with widely varying levels of alcohol use.

## Sponsoring Organizations

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry - ABMRF/The Foundation for Alcohol Research - American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists - Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research - American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases - American College of Neuropsychopharmacology - American Psychiatric Association - American Psychological Association - American Psychological Association, Division on Addictions - American Society of Addiction Medicine - Association for Psychological Science - Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America - Fairbanks - Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences - Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research - Legal Action Center - National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare - National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. - National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Research Society on Alcoholism

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