

FRIENDS OF NIDA

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February 18, 2005

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
1502 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1101

Dear Congressman Abercrombie,

We are writing representing the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to ask that you consider joining the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, 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 6.2 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. As this is a drug epidemic with no end in sight, likely to impact every congressional district in the country, we urge you to endorse the efforts of your colleagues, Representatives, Boswell, Calvert, Cannon and Larsen by joining the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine.

Please contact Evan Schatz (226-9715) on Congressman Larsen's staff for more information.

Friends of NIDA:

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American College Health Association
American College of Neuropsychopharmacology
American Correctional Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Psychological Association
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences
Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
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Join Together
National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors
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National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
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