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**NIDA Announces Call for Submissions for 2009 Avant-Garde Award for Innovative
Research in the Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Drug Abusers**

Awardees Receive \$500,000 per year for five years

As many as three scientists will receive up to \$500,000 each year for five years for potentially groundbreaking approaches to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in drug abusers. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), created the Avant-Garde Award to stimulate high-impact research into the link between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. NIDA is now accepting submissions for its 2009 Avant-Garde awards program.

The Avant-Garde Awards are modeled after the NIH Pioneer Awards, which are granted to scientists of exceptional creativity who propose pioneering, and possibly transformative, approaches to major challenges in biomedical behavioral research.

“NIDA’s Avant-Garde awards are part of NIH’s ongoing efforts to support research that is high risk, but has the potential to revolutionize our investigative approach to specific life-altering health problems,” said Dr. Raynard Kington, NIH acting director. “We believe it is important to encourage researchers who have the potential to turn old views upside down.”

In 2008, three awardees were chosen out of 52 applicants to receive the Avant-Garde Award. One scientist is investigating HIV’s ability to hijack key proteins involved in the regulation of host cell gene expression; another researcher is working to develop agents that can effectively block the spread of the HIV virus within the body; and the third award recipient is evaluating the effectiveness of expanded access to highly active antiretroviral therapy in decreasing new cases of HIV infection among injection drug users.

“NIDA’s Avant-Garde Awards are already stimulating innovative research into the connection between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS,” said Dr. Nora D. Volkow, NIDA director. “We hope this year’s submissions will bring another round of exceptional and truly novel scientific proposals.”

Applications for the 2009 Avant-Garde Award will be accepted until February 29, 2009. For further information about the application process or last year’s awardees, visit the NIDA Avant-Garde Award Web site at <http://drugabuse.gov/avgp.html>

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at www.drugabuse.gov. To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's new DrugPubs research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or drugpubs@nida.nih.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — *The Nation's Medical Research Agency* — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.