

# NIAAA NEWSLETTER

FEATURING INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

WINTER 2004 NUMBER 3

## National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD) 2004 is coming Thursday, April 8th.

For information about registering to host NASD events, visit [www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org](http://www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org)

NASD is supported by NIAAA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in partnership with Screening for Mental Health, Inc.

For details see the NASD Web site or contact Sarah Lawler at 800/253-7658, ext. 113.

## CONTENTS

- 1 NIAAA moves to Fishers Lane
- 2 Alcohol Screening Day
- 2 Personnel News
- 3 Binge Drinking Defined
- 3 New Publications
- 4 Practitioner's Guide Wins Award
- 4 Calendar of Events

## NIAAA Moves to Fishers Lane

### *First Phase of Transition to New Buildings*

On January 16, 2004, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) relocated its administrative and extramural offices to 5635 Fishers Lane in Rockville, Maryland. The newly constructed building features expanded conference space along with improved information technology and communications capacities. The NIAAA offices comprise the entire second and third floors of the five-story facility.

NIAAA Director T.K. Li, M.D. said, "The new building is a welcome upgrade for our staff and a first step toward integrating most of our intramural and extramural programs in one location." Later this year, NIAAA's intramural researchers will move next door into 5625 Fishers Lane. Dr. Li said, "Our new location will improve communications across our intramural and extramural divisions and help us to fulfill NIAAA's multidisciplinary mission."

### **A Smooth Transition**

"There are many bonuses to our new location," said Stephen Long, NIAAA's Executive Officer, who spearheaded

negotiations during the building's construction. "The site is part of an important zone of new development around the Twinbrook Metro, which is nearby. A parking garage is conveniently located adjacent to our building, and there are plans for bringing restaurants, a gym, and other added features right into the building complex," he said.

Mr. Long praised the NIAAA staff's cooperation for making the move go as smoothly as possible. "Special thanks go to Dave Orchard and all the staff who helped, especially the administrative and IT staff for the efficient way they handled the logistics of the relocation process," said Mr. Long.

### **New Address**

All NIAAA staff phone numbers and fax numbers remain the same. For mailing purposes, the new address is:

**5635 Fishers Lane  
MSC 9304  
Bethesda, MD 20892-9304**

However, for Fed-Ex, UPS, and deliveries, it should be noted that the city and zip are **Rockville, MD 20852**.



A view of NIAAA's new home at 5635 Fishers Lane in Rockville, Maryland. To the right is the corner of 5625 Fishers Lane, the building that will house the NIAAA intramural program.



# Alcohol Screening Day Is Approaching

Around the country, sites are preparing for National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD), scheduled for April 8, 2004. The program is conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Screening for Mental Health, Inc. This year nearly 40 other organizations will serve as NASD sponsors, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the American Medical Association (AMA), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The theme of NASD is "*Alcohol and your health: Where do you draw the line?*" The intent is to raise public awareness about alcohol's effects on general health by providing a variety of educational materials and the opportunity to meet with a health care professional. NASD also educates people about the consequences of at-risk drinking

and seeks to identify people who may be at particular risk for problems with alcohol.

A wide variety of colleges, hospitals, businesses, military bases, and Government agencies host NASD events. They arrange screening sites in campus centers, shopping malls, and other community-based venues. At the sites, participants may receive a written screening questionnaire and the opportunity to meet with a health professional. Referrals for further evaluation and/or treatment are provided when appropriate.

Last year, 62,015 people were screened at 3,727 sites. Between 20 to 25 percent of those screened scored above 8 on the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test—an indication that they needed either advice to cut back on their drinking or referral for further assessment and/or treatment.

In 2003, NASD sites screened more minority participants than ever before. Sponsors are again extending their outreach

efforts to include American Indian, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and African American populations.

## Host a Screening Site

Health care and mental health professionals, treatment providers, and counselors are encouraged to partner with employers, college administrators, and community leaders to conduct screening during this year's event. Support can be given in three ways:

- contributing staff such as physicians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers, who also will be eligible for continuing education credits;
- providing locations for the event;
- advertising the program to alert the local community to the availability, location, date, and time of this important event.

In previous years, successful sites have launched campaigns emphasizing that NASD offers free, evidence-based, and practical information on alcohol's effects and its impact on health, work or school performance, and personal relationships. Equally important is the careful selection of the screening site. These often include doctor's offices, hospital lobbies, college campuses, military bases, and other high-traffic areas.

Each screening site receives a customized information kit with all the materials necessary to host a screening day event, including a step-by-step guide; tips from previous years' successful sites; suggestions for recruiting special populations; promotional materials, such as sample news releases, public service announcements, and Op-Ed pieces; educational brochures, pamphlets, posters, and flyers for the public; and copies of the NASD screening form.

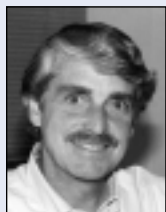
In addition to the on-site screening program, Screening for Mental Health, Inc., offers an interactive workplace alcohol-screening program for employers, featuring educational and promotional materials that complement the NASD event.

## Register Today

It's still possible to register to host a screening day site. Contact the NASD office at 800/253-7658 or nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org for help in planning and promoting a screening site in your community. Register by **March 29, 2004**, to guarantee delivery of your kit(s) by April 8.

## PERSONNEL NEWS

### Appointments



**Ralph W. Hingson, Sc.D., M.P.H.,** recently was named director of NIAAA's Division of Epidemiology and Prevention Research. Dr. Hingson was a key contributor

to NIAAA's landmark report, *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges*. An expert on drunk driving legislation, Dr. Hingson's research helped stimulate passage of Federal legislation that provided incentives for States to make it illegal for drivers under age 21 to drive after any drinking.

Dr. Hingson is the recipient of numerous distinguished awards, including the 2001 Innovators Combating Substance Abuse Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the 2002 Widmark Award, the highest award bestowed by the International Council on Alcohol Drugs and Traffic Safety. In

2003, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) instituted the Ralph W. Hingson Research in Practice Annual Presidential Award, with Dr. Hingson as its first recipient.

**Nanwei Cao, Ph.D.,** joined the Strategic Research Planning Branch in the Office of Scientific Affairs. Dr. Cao will manage the SMART database, which maintains scientific coding for disease reporting. She has a master's degree in computer and information science and a doctorate in theoretical physics, both from City University of New York. Previously, Dr. Cao worked for the National Institutes of Health Center for Information Technology.

**Alexei Yeliseev, Ph.D.,** was appointed as a staff scientist in the Section of Nuclear Magnetic Resonance in NIAAA's Intramural Laboratory of Membrane Biochemistry and Biophysics. His work will focus on the expression, purification, and reconstitution of G-protein-coupled membrane receptors for NMR structural studies.

Published by the Office of Research Translation and Communications, NIAAA, NIH, DHHS

NIH Publication No. 04-5346  
Web address: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>  
E-mail: [NIAAnewsletter@nih.gov](mailto:NIAAnewsletter@nih.gov)

Editor: Gregory Roa  
NIAAA Office of Research Translation and Communications  
5635 Fishers Lane, MSC 9304  
Bethesda, MD 20892-9304  
Phone: 301/443-3860 Fax: 301/480-1726

# NIAAA Council Approves Definition of Binge Drinking

On February 5, 2004, the NIAAA National Advisory Council approved the following definition/statement:

A “binge” is a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 gram percent or above. For the typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about 2 hours. Binge drinking is clearly dangerous for the drinker and for society.

- In the above definition, a “drink” refers to half an ounce of alcohol (e.g., one 12-oz. beer, one 5-oz. glass of wine, or one 1.5-oz. shot of distilled spirits).
- Binge drinking is distinct from “risky” drinking (reaching a peak BAC between .05 gram percent and .08 gram percent) and a “bender” (2 or more days of sustained heavy drinking).
- For some individuals (e.g., older people or people taking other drugs or certain medications), the number of drinks needed to reach a binge-level BAC is lower than for the “typical adult.”
- People with risk factors for the development of alcoholism have increased risk with any level of alcohol consumption, even that below a “risky” level.
- For pregnant women, any drinking presents risk to the fetus.
- Drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal.

The Council’s decision was based on a recommendation from a task force chaired by NIAAA Associate Director Dr. Mark Goldman.

“The task force was charged with developing a recommended definition of binge drinking for use in

the field’s future research efforts,” said Dr. Lorraine Gunzerath, acting chief, Strategic Research Planning Branch in NIAAA’s Office of Scientific Affairs, who spearheaded the task force report. Task force members included Drs. Raul Caetano, Sandra Brown, Kenneth Hoffman, George Koob, Sean O’Connor, and Kenneth Sher. The group held a workshop November 4–5, 2003, to determine the factors that define heavy episodic drinking or distinguish it from other patterns of

alcohol use and abuse, including cut-off points, amounts, or timeframes; predictive factors; trajectories; and outcomes. Over the 2-day workshop, the task force heard invited presentations in the areas of neurobiology, physiology, psychology, sociocultural contexts, and measurement issues. After reviewing the presented material, the members reconvened on February 4, 2004, to produce a consensus definition, and submitted their recommendation to the full Council for approval.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### *Assessing Alcohol Problems*

This volume is a must for clinicians and researchers concerned with assessing patients’ alcohol problems using psychometric instruments. Subject matter experts review domains of assessment—different stages of treatment such as screening, diagnosis, planning, treatment, and outcome—that require different types of instruments, and they describe issues relevant to each area. An update of the 1996 *Assessing Alcohol Problems: A Guide for Clinicians and Researchers*, this second edition presents in one convenient location, samples of more than 70 assessment instruments, along with fact sheets, an at-a-glance “Quick Reference Instrument Guide,” and tables within each chapter comparing instruments used in each domain of treatment. *Assessing Alcohol Problems* is loose-leaf bound to make page replacement and updating easier.



### Two New Publications in Spanish—

*Both publications are available in quantities to health care providers for distribution to patients.*

*Antecedentes de alcoholismo en la familia—¿Está usted a riesgo?*, the Spanish-language version of *A Family History of Alcoholism—Are You at Risk?* provides easy-to-read facts along with sources of more information for anyone who is concerned about a family history of alcoholism.



*Reacciones peligrosas: Mezclando bebidas alcohólicas con medicamentos*, the Spanish-language version of *Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines* highlights the risks of using alcohol while taking medications or herbal preparations and lists common medicines and their possible reactions with alcohol.



### TO ORDER:

Write to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Publications Distribution Center, P.O. Box 10686, Rockville, MD 20849–0686. These publications and other materials are also available online at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>, or by fax at 703/312–5230.

# NIAAA Practitioner's Guide Wins Technical Communicators' Award

NIAAA's *Helping Patients With Alcohol Problems: A Health Practitioner's Guide* recently won an award for its clarity and usability from the Washington, D.C. chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). The international society, which includes 25,000 professional writers, editors, illustrators, and designers, is dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences of technical communication.



The Washington, D.C. competition results were announced on February 7, 2004. The judges ranked the *Guide* in its "Distinguished" category, placing it in the top 5 out of 67 entries. The score qualifies the *Guide* to advance to the Society's international competition.

NIAAA was in very good company—among the other top 5 competitors was the Space Shuttle Columbia Accident Investigation Board, whose report, prepared by more than 100 staff, received the "best in show" prize.

The high marks for NIAAA's *Guide* are richly deserved, considering the extensive work that went into the document prior to its release last year. With direction from an expert panel of grantees, NIAAA staff incorporated the latest research-based content within an easy-to-navigate graphic design. The publication was further refined through two stages of interviews with primary care practitioners from a variety of practice settings.

The hard work paid off in the eyes of the STC competition judges. Here are some of their comments about the NIAAA *Guide*:

- "Everything about this publication works effectively to reinforce the twin messages that healthcare practitioners should screen patients for alcohol problems and how to do so. The organization and content are very strong, and the visual elements, especially the use of color, reinforce the message."
- "The structure of the brochure adds to its usability and the likelihood that it will be used as intended rather than simply being shelved or thrown away."
- "The information is crisp and easy to read—should enable busy audiences to grasp and use the information quickly."
- "The lively, bold headings make it easy to navigate...there's nothing stodgy about this brochure."

## Calendar of Events

NIAAA will participate in or exhibit at the meetings and conferences listed below. For additional information or updates on these events, consult the sponsoring organizations.

### MARCH

- ▶ **March 17–18 The Drunken Brain Exhibit—Part of Brain Awareness Week (March 15–19)**  
National Museum of Health and Medicine  
Washington, DC  
Contact: <http://nmhm.washingtondc.museum/>

Designed by NIAAA's Dr. Dennis Twombly, this unique exhibit for students explains how alcohol-induced changes in neuronal activity translate into altered brain communication, motor performance, sensory perception, cognition, and ultimately, dependence. Drs. Roger Sorensen and Vishnu Purohit from NIAAA will present exhibits on alcohol-related tissue damage and risks of adolescent binge drinking. Brain Awareness Week is organized by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives to advance public awareness about the progress, promise, and benefits of brain research. For more information visit [www.dana.org/brainweek/](http://www.dana.org/brainweek/). NIAAA also will feature the Drunken Brain Exhibit on April 24 at the National Institutes of Health "Share the Health" Expo (<http://sharethehealth.od.nih.gov/index.asp>).

- ▶ **March 19–21 National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) Annual Conference**  
Washington, DC  
Contact: [www.nhmamd.org/](http://www.nhmamd.org/)
- ▶ **March 29 Deadline for site registration for National Alcohol Screening Day 2004**
- ▶ **March 31–April 3 PRIDE Youth Programs Annual Conference, "Gateway to the Future"**  
St. Louis, MO  
Contact: [www.prideyouthprograms.org](http://www.prideyouthprograms.org)

NIAAA is a sponsor of this annual drug and alcohol prevention conference expected to draw more than 3,000 youth and adults. The PRIDE conference features motivational speakers and more than 100 workshops. PRIDE Youth Programs is a youth organization dedicated to teaching young people to lead healthy, productive lives.

### APRIL

*April is Alcohol Awareness Month.*

- ▶ **April 8 National Alcohol Screening Day**  
Contact: [www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org](http://www.NationalAlcoholScreeningDay.org), or call 800/253-7658, or send e-mail to [nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org](mailto:nasd@mentalhealthscreening.org)

- ▶ **April 24 "Advances in Alcoholism Treatment and Health Services Research"—NIAAA-sponsored symposium at the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Annual Medical-Scientific Conference**  
Washington, DC  
Contact: Nancy Colladay 301/443-4733; [ncollada@willco.niaaa.nih.gov](mailto:ncollada@willco.niaaa.nih.gov)

### MAY

- ▶ **May 1–6 American Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting**  
New York, NY  
Contact: [www.psych.org/](http://www.psych.org/)
- ▶ **May 27–30 American Psychological Society Annual Conference**  
Chicago, IL  
Contact: [www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/index.cfm](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/index.cfm)
- ▶ **May 27 NIAAA National Advisory Council Meeting**  
Rockville, MD  
Contact: Ida Nestorio 301/443-4376; [inestori@willco.niaaa.nih.gov](mailto:inestori@willco.niaaa.nih.gov)