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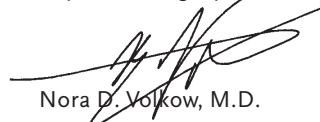
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A Note From NIDA's Director

The rehabilitation of substance-abusing criminal offenders is an urgent issue for public health and public safety. In addition, improving treatment for these individuals could be a key to raising the overall success rates in the Nation's drug abuse treatment system. In some States, as many as two-thirds of those who enroll in community treatment programs do so under judicial mandate (see "Drug Abuse Treatment Beyond Prison Walls," page 24). Yet, recent meta-analyses suggest that substance-abusing offenders benefit less from interventions to reduce recidivism or drug abuse than do substance-abusing nonoffenders or offenders who are not involved with drugs: The findings showed smaller intervention effects in study populations consisting exclusively of substance-abusing offenders than in general substance abuse or offender populations (see "Interventions to Promote Successful Re-Entry Among Drug-Abusing Parolees," page 6).

To meet the challenge and gain the benefits of improving care for substance-abusing offenders, NIDA launched the Criminal Justice–Drug Abuse Treatment Studies (CJ-DATS) project (www.cjdats.org) in 2002. In the project's first 6 years, CJ-DATS researchers have conducted large-scale surveys of treatment availability and effectiveness, setting a baseline for measuring improvements; developed specialized screening and assessment batteries for drug-abusing offenders; and generated and tested strategies to help parolees re-engage with their communities. A second phase of the CJ-DATS project, now under way, addresses implementation issues, including policies and practices to integrate justice and treatment systems and practices.

In 2006, NIDA published *Principles of Drug Abuse Treatment for Criminal Justice Populations*, codifying the lessons learned from CJ-DATS and other research (drugabuse.gov/PODAT_CJ/principles). The response to the booklet makes clear that the sense of urgency on this issue is widespread; it has become one of the most requested single publications in NIDA's history.



Nora D. Volkow, M.D.
Director

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