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NIDA Announces New Tools for Drug Abuse Treatment Blending Team Initiative Shortens Time from Research to Clinical Practice

Two new products designed to speed the adoption of science-based interventions into clinical practice are now available from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). These new "Blending Team" products are part of an expanding portfolio that includes the latest research findings on drug abuse approaches and interventions. Blending Teams are composed of NIDA researchers, community-based substance abuse treatment practitioners, and trainers from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network. In addition to the Blending Teams, NIDA sponsors a number of Blending conferences which are held periodically around the country to facilitate communication between researchers and treatment providers.

The two new Blending Team products are:

- *Motivational Interviewing Assessment: Supervisory Tools for Enhancing Proficiency (MIA:STEP)*, tailored for clinical supervisors to train front-line treatment providers to improve their motivational interviewing skills. It also includes a new package of tools designed to enhance patient engagement and retention.
- *Promoting Awareness of Motivational Incentives (PAMI)*. These tools provide information about the science-based intervention called motivational incentives (low or no-cost reinforcements such as vouchers, prizes and privileges) and describes how the use of positive reinforcement has reduced drug abuse and has enhanced client retention in treatment programs. The PAMI products include support materials, resources, PowerPoint presentations for both clinicians and for policy makers, and an introductory video.

"Accelerating the dissemination of research-based findings into clinical practice is a key priority for NIH," said NIH Director Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni. "These Blending Team products

should substantially reduce the time lag between research and practice, making the best drug abuse and addiction treatments available to those who need them. It typically takes nearly two decades for published research findings to be implemented in clinical practice.”

“Research shows that positive rewards increase client retention in treatment programs, which is a strong predictor of favorable treatment outcomes,” said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. “These relatively low-cost motivational incentives are changing people’s lives.”

“The resulting products of the Blending Team Initiative between SAMHSA and NIDA ensure that professionals treating people with substance use disorders have more rapid access to research results. SAMHSA is pleased that through our Addiction Technology Transfer Centers—SAMHSA’s national treatment training network—we are able to bring these tools to the field more quickly where they can be implemented to help individuals achieve and sustain recovery,” said Terry L. Cline, Ph.D., SAMHSA Administrator.

“Harnessing the skills, resources, and knowledge of two Federal agencies to facilitate moving important scientific findings into mainstream addiction treatment practice is the goal of the NIDA/SAMHSA Blending Initiative,” said Dr. Timothy P. Condon, NIDA Deputy Director, who spearheaded the initiative. “These products, in addition to our popular Blending conferences, provide unique opportunities for teams of clinicians and researchers to share innovative strategies to implement scientific-based approaches into clinical practice.”

Previously released Blending Team products include training modules for treating addiction to opioid drugs with buprenorphine (a compound that can be delivered in the privacy of a doctor's office, which allows physicians to treat drug abuse and addiction in the same manner they treat people for other chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or high blood pressure). Another team has developed a product titled: Treatment Planning M.A.T.R.S. which instructs providers on how to transform required "paperwork" (assessments, forms, questionnaires, case notes, etc.) into clinically useful information – Measurable, Attainable, Time-limited, Realistic and Specific (M.A.T.R.S.). These materials provide a comprehensive structure for clinicians to organize a client's treatment record.

Blending Team products and more information on the NIDA Blending initiative can be accessed at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/blending/>.

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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 ensure the rapid dissemination of research information to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and further information on NIDA research can be found on the NIDA web site at <http://www.drugabuse.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