

# VISIONS

NAATP Visions is the official newsletter of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP), the American College of Addiction Treatment Administrators (ACATA), the National Adolescent Treatment Consortium (NATC) and the National Treatment Consortium (NTC).

## LEADING PHYSICIANS CALL ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE A “MAJOR NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM,” RECOMMEND SYSTEMIC CHANGES

JANUARY, 2004

**T**he Physician Leadership on National Drug Policy (PLNDP)—a bipartisan group of leading physicians from across the country—recently released a comprehensive report on adolescent substance abuse and urged lawmakers and public health officials to revisit strategies for curbing and treating teen drug abuse.

The report “Adolescent Substance Abuse: A Public Health Priority,” contains recommendations for policy changes aimed at the prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment of adolescents prone to or affected by abuse:

- lawmakers are urged to increase federal and state funding for prevention and treatment efforts and to expand education efforts geared to adolescents to include current data on risk and protective measures;
- healthcare professionals are called upon to increase training for screening, diagnosis, referral and treatment, as well as to expand support for research to develop and test intervention models;
- the justice system is urged to expand treatment and services for adolescents in correctional facilities, provide transitional and aftercare services as youth re-enter the community, increase collaboration and communication with the medicine, legal, and education communities, and increase research into the effectiveness of criminal justice procedures in reducing drug abuse and crime.

The report details the prevalence and causes of adolescent substance abuse, and the particular challenges posed when abuse and addiction take hold in young people. “Substance abuse among teens is a national problem in need of national attention,” said Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of Health and Human Services and a member of PLNDP. “The bad news is that substance abuse is starting at younger ages, taking hold earlier, and leading many teens to end up in jail. The good news is that a growing body of evidence suggests that prevention and treatment work, and are more efficient and cost-effective than incarceration alone.”



The 70+ page report highlights the link between adolescent substance use problems and mental health disorders, and explores the role that America’s juvenile justice system can play in holding youth accountable for delinquent behavior while at the same time linking them to treatments and resources that effectively treat addiction and prevent future problems. “Adolescents are a special population with a unique set of challenges and needs,” said June E. Osborn, M.D., Chair of PLNDP. “This report points out that it is in all of our interests to see that these needs are met.”

The 37-founding members of PLNDP include many former high-ranking health or drug policy advisors under the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations. In addition to Drs. Sullivan and Osborn, PLNDP members include David Kessler, M.D., immediate past Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration; Edward Brandt, M.D. and Philip Lee, M.D., who were Assistant Secretaries of Health and Human Services under Presidents Reagan and Clinton, respectively; Antonia Novello, M.D., former U.S. Surgeon General under the Bush Administration and current Health Commissioner of New York; Frederick Robbins, M.D., Nobel Laureate; the current and former editors of the Journal of the American Medical Association and the former editor of Science; and a former editor of the New England Journal of Medicine. Funding for the PLNDP project comes principally from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The organization’s consensus statement on drug abuse and addiction has been endorsed by many medical professional organizations, including the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, American Society of Addiction Medicine, and Society of General Internal Medicine.

This physician organization has also announced that it plans to change its name in 2004. PLNDP

### IN THIS ISSUE...

- NAATP Benchmark Report P. 2
- CARON/Albright Scholarship P. 4
- First Non-Opiate Treatment P. 5
- New Health Plan Standards P. 6

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## **BRITANNIA SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH US WORLDMEDS TO BRING FIRST NON-OPIATE DRUG ADDICTION TREATMENT TO THE U.S.**

*U.S. company intends to guide successful European treatment through FDA approval and commercial launch*

Britannia Pharmaceuticals Limited announced in the fall of 2003 that it has signed a licensing agreement with US WorldMeds, LLC to further develop and launch Britannia's non-addictive drug addiction treatment Lofexidine Hydrochloride in the United States. The two companies, who were brought together by Parsons Strategic Associates, have been working together for the past several months to complete the agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, US WorldMeds intends to negotiate with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health and U.S. Department of Health Services to conduct further studies aimed at bringing Lofexidine to patients in the U.S. US WorldMeds will assume all regulatory and marketing initiatives and the commercialization of the product.

Lofexidine is the only non-opiate, non-addictive treatment approved in the United Kingdom used to manage withdrawal symptoms in patients undergoing opiate detoxification. It is effective in reducing the symptoms associated with withdrawal such as chills, vomiting, sweating, stomach cramps, diarrhea, muscle pain, and runny nose and eyes. Lofexidine has been available in the United Kingdom for several years, under the brand name BritLofex®. In the UK, the treatment is responsible for approximately 20,000 detoxifications per year. The drug's proven level of safety allows it to be used in an outpatient context, giving patients another option in parts of the country and world where treatment clinics are not readily available.

"We have seen the tremendous impact that BritLofex® has on the lives - and recovery - of addicts in the UK for more than a decade and have been working to bring this treatment to the U.S. for some time," said Max Noble, Managing Director of Britannia. "We have been searching for a competent and motivated U.S. partner to take this important drug through FDA approval and are thrilled to have found exceptionally talented, knowledgeable and passionate industry experts at US WorldMeds. We have tremendous confidence in US WorldMeds' commitment and ability to bring Lofexidine to the U.S. patients who need it."

In 1996, Britannia began working with NIDA to bring the treatment to market in the U.S. As part of this work, in April 2002, a Phase III trial investigating the use of Lofexidine for the treatment of opiate withdrawal symptoms was halted due to significant evidence of efficacy in the Lofexidine treatment group as compared with a placebo group. The Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the trial determined that due to the overwhelming efficacy demonstrated by Lofexidine, it would be unethical, to those receiving the placebo, to continue the clinical trial.

"Lofexidine has the potential to fundamentally change the way opiate addiction is treated in the United States and we are thrilled to help turn this potential into reality," said Paul Breckinridge "Breck" Jones, CEO of US WorldMeds. "Britannia's non-narcotic, non-addictive formulation is targeted at managing the symptoms experienced by patients undergoing medically supervised opiate withdrawal. The implications of this treatment are powerful."

In addition to the studies that have tested Lofexidine's efficacy in preventing withdrawal symptoms, a pilot study conducted at Yale University tested the drug's efficacy in relapse prevention. The results of the study, which were presented at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence's annual conference in June 2003, showed that opiate addicts treated with a combination of Lofexidine and an opiate antagonist were more likely to remain opiate-free and suffer no significant adverse effects. Although the drug does not have a license for relapse prevention as yet, further studies are planned to examine increasing the scope of Lofexidine use to include use as a long-term "aid to abstinence."

US WorldMeds, LLC is a closely held specialty pharmaceutical company based in Louisville, Kentucky. Founded in 2001, US WorldMeds is focused on identifying, developing and commercializing therapeutic treatments for niche patient populations.

Founded in 1981, Britannia Pharmaceuticals Limited is a United Kingdom-based pharmaceutical firm whose mission is to become a leading supplier of innovative products for niche medical conditions. The company has pioneered new treatments for some of the world's most debilitating conditions including asthma, Parkinson's disease, drug addiction, erectile dysfunction, migraine, and surgical adhesions. In addition to these treatments, Britannia has also developed nasal and respiratory drug delivery technologies that are applicable to a wide range of treatments. Britannia is a Forum Bioscience Company. The website address is [www.britannia-pharm.co.uk](http://www.britannia-pharm.co.uk).

## **ADCARE ADDS TO MARKETING TEAM**

AdCare Hospital, one of the county's top 100 treatment centers, adds a new member to its marketing team. James F. McKenna, VP of Marketing and Development, is pleased to announce that Megan Nocivelli has joined AdCare Hospital's Community Services team.

As a Community Services Representative, Megan will assist businesses, unions and agencies in providing alcohol and drug treatment services to employees and clients in need. She will also be available to confer with family members concerned about a loved one's substance abuse. Megan will be responsible for the development of corporate accounts throughout New England as well as referral sources for Central and Northern Massachusetts, Portsmouth, New Hampshire and the state of Maine.

Megan Nocivelli, formerly of Anheuser-Busch Inc., Busch Entertainment Corporation, has been a marketing and community relations professional for over 15 years. Megan earned a BA from St. Michael's College, Winooski, Vermont and studied two years in the MBA program at St. Louis University. She has spent the last 11 years marketing all ten of the Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks, most recently as the National Partnership Marketing Manager. Megan is married with two daughters and resides in Holden, Massachusetts.

