

# *FRIENDS OF NIDA*

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## Executive Committee

William Dewey (Chair)  
College on Problems of  
Drug Dependence

Marie Dyak, Entertainment  
Industries Council, Inc.

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National Association of  
Drug Court Professionals

Andrew Kessler,  
National Association of Alcohol  
and Drug Abuse Counselors

Eileen McGrath,  
American Society  
of Addiction Medicine

Robert Morrison,  
National Association of  
State Alcohol/Drug  
Abuse Directors

Geoffrey Mumford, American  
Psychological Association

Charles O'Keeffe, Virginia  
Commonwealth University

Richard Rosenthal,  
American Academy of Addiction  
Psychiatry

Sue Thau,  
Community Anti-Drug  
Coalitions of America

October 27, 2005

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee  
123 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Specter and Senator Harkin:

Drug abuse and addiction represent a major health crisis in America, and create an economic burden of over \$484 billion per year. One way we can and should continue to address this problem is through scientific research. Because of the critical importance of drug abuse research for the health and economy of our nation, we write to you today as the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (Friends of NIDA) to request that you support the Senate number of \$29.4 billion or a 3.7% increase over Fiscal 2005 for the National Institutes of Health and support the Senate's number of \$1,035,167,000 for the National Institutes on Drug Abuse in Conference on the Fiscal 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies bill.

NIDA is the world's largest supporter of research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute supports a comprehensive research portfolio that has led to our current understanding of addiction as a preventable developmental disorder and a chronic relapsing disease associated with long lasting changes in the brain and the body that can affect all aspects of a person's life.

NIDA's research portfolio is broad and deep, and spans the continuum of basic neuroscience, behavior and genetics research through applied health services research and epidemiology. Recognizing substance abuse as a disorder that can affect the course of other diseases, including HIV/AIDS, mental illness, trauma, cancer, cardiovascular disease and even obesity is critical to improving the health of our citizens. NIDA has launched several efforts to reach out to numerous professions within the healthcare community to address these issues.

We understand that the Fiscal 2006 budget is very tight and will involve setting priorities and accepting compromise. However, in the current climate, we believe that substance abuse and addiction, which according to the World Health Organization account for nearly 20 percent of disabilities among 15-44 year olds, deserve to be prioritized accordingly. We look forward to working with you to make this a reality.

Sincerely,  
The Friends of NIDA