

THE IPRN NEWS

IOWARECOVERY.ORG

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 4
APRIL 2007

Iowa Pharmacy Recovery Network, Inc.
31702 Granite Avenue, Hinton, Iowa 51024
1-877-890-4776 or emily@proheights.com

Inside this issue:

- 1. The Cost of Alcoholism**
- 2. What is Alcoholism?**
- 3. Alcohol Abuse**
- 4. Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Information**
- 5. In Memory**
- 6. The Heartland Conference**
- 7. The Utah School**

Alcohol-related problems cost society approximately \$185 billion per year. In human terms, the costs cannot be calculated.

The Cost of ALCOHOLISM

For most people who drink, alcohol is a pleasant accompaniment to social activities. Moderate alcohol use—up to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women and older people—is not harmful for most adults. (A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle or can of either beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.) Nonetheless, a large number of people get into serious trouble because of their drinking. Currently, nearly 14 million Americans—1 in every 13 adults—abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. Several million more adults engage in risky drinking that could lead to alcohol problems. These patterns include binge drinking and heavy drinking on a regular basis. In addition, 53 percent of men and women in the United States report that one or more of their close relatives have a drinking problem. The consequences of alcohol misuse are serious—in many cases, life threatening. Heavy drinking can increase the risk for certain cancers, especially those of the liver, esophagus, throat, and larynx (voice box). Heavy drinking can also cause liver cirrhosis, immune system problems, brain damage, and harm to the fetus during pregnancy. In addition, drinking increases the risk of death from automobile crashes as well as recreational and on-the-job injuries. Furthermore, both homicides and suicides are more likely to be committed by persons who have been drinking. In purely economic terms, alcohol-related problems cost society approximately \$185 billion per year. In human terms, the costs cannot be calculated.

IPRN recognizes the costs of alcoholism and drug dependencies to society, to our patients and to our profession. We are committed to education on the diseases of alcoholism and drug dependencies. We are also committed to assisting members of our profession to seek help, to find treatment and to begin recovery. We do this through advocacy, education, peer assistance and recovery.

IPRN'S GOALS

Providing direction as a confidential resource

Providing support through caring volunteers

Providing education about impairment

We are committed to excellence!

What is Alcoholism?

For many people, the facts about alcoholism are not clear. What is alcoholism, exactly? How does it differ from alcohol abuse? When should a person seek help for a problem related to his or her drinking? The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) has prepared this booklet to help individuals and families answer these and other common questions about alcohol problems. The following information explains alcoholism and alcohol abuse, the symptoms of each, when and where to seek help, treatment choices, and additional helpful resources.

Alcoholism, also known as “alcohol dependence,” is a disease that includes four symptoms:

- **Craving:** A strong need, or compulsion, to drink.
- **Loss of control:** The inability to limit one’s drinking on any given occasion.
- **Physical dependence:** Withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety, occur when alcohol use is stopped after a period of heavy drinking.
- **Tolerance:** The need to drink greater amounts of alcohol in order to “get high.”

People who are not alcoholic sometimes do not understand why an alcoholic can’t just “use a little willpower” to stop drinking. However, alcoholism has little to do with willpower. Alcoholics are in the grip of a powerful “craving,” or uncontrollable need, for alcohol that overrides their ability to stop drinking. This need can be as strong as the need for food or water. Although some people are able to recover from alcoholism without help, the majority of alcoholics need assistance. With treatment and support, many individuals are able to stop drinking and rebuild their lives. Many people wonder why some individuals can use alcohol without problems but others cannot. One important reason has to do with genetics. Scientists have found that having an alcoholic family member makes it more likely that if you choose to drink you too may develop alcoholism. Genes, however, are not the whole story. In fact, scientists now believe that certain factors in a person’s environment influence whether a person with a genetic risk for alcoholism ever develops the disease. A person’s risk for developing alcoholism can increase based on the person’s environment, including where and how he or she lives; family, friends, and culture; peer pressure; and even how easy it is to get alcohol. (As you find with many diseases, the exact cause may never be known.)

Alcohol abuse differs from alcoholism in that it does not include an extremely strong craving for alcohol, loss of control over drinking, or physical dependence. (Alcoholics may or may not have physical dependence but generally the craving for alcohol is present. The alcoholic must admit they are powerless over alcohol to begin recovery in the AA program.)

IPRN has maintained a 24-hour, toll-free hotline. Calls made to the hotline included individuals needing help and concerned others.

The toll free number is: (877) 890-IPRN

Alcoholics are in the grip of a powerful “craving,” or uncontrollable need, for alcohol that overrides their ability to stop drinking.

Be a part of the solution!

Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol abuse (according to The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism) is defined as a pattern of drinking that results in one or more of the following situations within a 12-month period:

- **Failure to fulfill major work, school, or home responsibilities;**
- **Drinking in situations that are physically dangerous, such as while driving a car or operating machinery;**
- **Having recurring alcohol-related legal problems, such as being arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or for physically hurting someone while drunk; and**
- **Continued drinking despite having ongoing relationship problems that are caused or worsened by the drinking. Although alcohol abuse is basically different from alcoholism, many effects of alcohol abuse are also experienced by alcoholics.**

Please feel free to call IPRN if you need assistance, need information or need help with an intervention.

We can help!

How can you tell whether you may have a drinking problem? Answering the following four questions can help you find out:

- **Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?**
- **Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?**
- **Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?**
- **Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning (as an “eye opener”) to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?**

One “yes” answer suggests a possible alcohol problem. If you answered “yes” to more than one question, it is highly likely that a problem exists. In either case, it is important that you see your doctor or other health care provider right away to discuss your answers to these questions. He or she can help you determine whether you have a drinking problem and, if so, recommend the best course of action.

Even if you answered “no” to all of the above questions, if you encounter drinking-related problems with your job, relationships, health, or the law, you should seek professional help. The effects of alcohol abuse can be extremely serious—even fatal—both to you and to others.

Accepting the fact that help is needed for an alcohol problem may not be easy. But keep in mind that the sooner you get help, the better are your chances for a successful recovery. Any concerns you may have about discussing drinking-related problems with your health care provider may stem from common misconceptions about alcoholism and alcoholic people. In our society, the myth prevails that an alcohol problem is a sign of moral weakness. As a result, you may feel that to seek help is to admit some type of shameful defect in yourself. In fact, alcoholism is a disease that is no more a sign of weakness than is asthma. Moreover, taking steps to identify a possible drinking problem has an enormous payoff—a chance for a healthier, more rewarding life.

Accepting the fact that help is needed for an alcohol problem may not be easy. But keep in mind that the sooner you get help, the better are your chances for a successful recovery.

Welcome to Recovery!

Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Information

For more information on alcohol abuse and alcoholism, contact the following organizations:

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1600 Corporate Landing Parkway Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617

Phone: (757) 563-1600; Fax: (757) 563-1655

Email: WSO@al-anon.org

Internet address: <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>

Makes referrals to local Al-Anon groups, which are support groups for spouses and other significant adults in an alcoholic person's life. Also makes referrals to Alateen groups, which offer support to children of alcoholics. Free informational materials and locations of Al-Anon or Alateen meetings worldwide can be obtained by calling the toll-free number (888) 425-2666 from the United States or Canada, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. (E.S.T.).

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) World Services, Inc.

475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor New York, NY 10115

Phone: (212) 870-3400; Fax: (212) 870-3003

Email: via AA's Web site

Internet address: <http://www.aa.org>

Makes referrals to local AA groups and provides informational materials on the AA program. Many cities and towns also have a local AA office listed in the telephone book. All communication should be directed to AA's mailing address: AA World Services, Inc., Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163.

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)

20 Exchange Place, Suite 2902 New York, NY 10005

Phone: (212) 269-7797; Fax: (212) 269-7510

Email: national@ncadd.org

HOPE LINE: (800) NCA-CALL (24-hour Affiliate referral)

Internet address: <http://www.ncadd.org>

Offers educational materials and information on alcoholism.

Provides phone numbers of local NCADD Affiliates (who can provide information on local treatment resources) via the above toll-free, 24-hour HOPE LINE.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

Scientific Communications Branch, 6000 Executive Boulevard, Willco Building, Suite 409 Bethesda, MD 20892-7003

Phone: (301) 443-3860; Fax: (301) 480-1726

Email: niaaaweb-r@exchange.nih.gov

Internet address: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

Makes available free informational materials on all aspects of alcoholism, including the effects of drinking during pregnancy, alcohol use and the elderly, and help for cutting down on drinking. NIH Publication No. 96-4153, Revised 2001

The Iowa Pharmacy Recovery Network is always in need of caring volunteers throughout the State of Iowa. The profession needs you to make a difference!

Taking steps to identify a possible drinking problem has an enormous payoff—a chance for a healthier, more rewarding life.

Sharing ideas and information.

IN MEMORY

Janet Ralstin passed away April 15 at her home. Janet was a friend and very active in the PRN programs throughout the states. She was one of the cofounders of the Heartland PRN Conference which is held annually in the Midwest. She was involved and helped with the conference when IPRN hosted it here in Iowa. Janet attended the Utah School on Alcoholism and Drug Dependencies regularly. It will not be the same without her. Janet gave of herself to assist others. She will be greatly missed. Her obituary can be viewed on Charlie's website at www.USAPRN.ORG.

You can make a difference!

The Heartland Conference was started in the late 1980's by pharmacists involved in their state programs who wanted to have an annual meeting to discuss ideas and share information. Many of the cofounders are still involved in the program.

Mark your calendars for this year's Heartland PRN Conference.

THE HEARTLAND CONFERENCE

The Heartland Pharmacy Recovery Network (PRN) is composed of the pharmacy recovery networks in the mid-western central United States. These recovery networks provide support systems and peer review to pharmacy professionals recovering from impairment due to substance abuse problems, mental illness or physical difficulty.

The Heartland Conference was started in the late 1980's by pharmacists involved in their state programs who wanted to have an annual meeting to discuss ideas and share information. Many of the cofounders are still involved in the program. Heartland holds the annual conference in a different state every year. Iowa has hosted the conference in the past and will be hosting again in 2008.

Heartland brings together people who are interested in their state programs, volunteers, student pharmacists, state board members and other pharmacy professionals. It provides an opportunity for networking with other state programs. It provides continuing education credits. On the outskirts, there will be an International Pharmacist Anonymous meeting which everyone is invited to attend.

The three-day weekend meeting is coordinated by the hosting state's recovery network. Since its first annual meeting in Overland, Kansas in 1992, the Heartland Pharmacy Recovery Network has become focused on fellowship, support and education for pharmacy professionals. This year is the 16th annual meeting.

**September 28-30, 2007- "*SHORE UP YOUR RECOVERY*"
16th Annual Heartland Pharmacists Recovery Network Conference
Hosted by: The Michigan Pharmacists Association Pharmacists
Helping Pharmacists Council**

**At Camp Geneva (on the shore of Lake Michigan)
3995 N Lakeshore Drive, Holland, Michigan 49424
Contact - Dan Smith (sdaniel0801@aol.com) or 616-891-1788
or Dianne Miller and/or Mary Farrington at the Michigan
Pharmacists Association, Lansing, Michigan 517-484-1466**

Share the joy of recovery!

