

ADDICTION EXCHANGE

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News from the worlds of clinical practice and research

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Welcome to *Addiction Exchange*, a forum for the exchange of clinical practice and research information among clinicians, scientists, educators, and administrators in the area of addiction. Today, we introduce the new **Clinical Trials Network** established by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), in which the Mid- ATTC will be involved.

Neuroscience and behavioral research has provided substantial evidence in support of the concept that drug addiction is a chronic, and for many people, a recurring disease. As is the case for other chronic disorders, effective treatments for addiction exist. However, the efficacy of these new treatments has been demonstrated primarily in specialized treatment research settings, with somewhat restricted patient populations. As a consequence, few of these new treatments are being applied on a wide-scale basis in real-life practice settings.

In response, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has established the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN). The CTN is based on a model used successfully by other NIH institutes, including the National Cancer Institute, the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The CTN will provide a research infrastructure to test whether new and improved treatment components are effective in real-life settings with diverse patient populations.

On September 28, 1999, NIDA awarded the first five grants. The following universities have been selected as the first five regional centers, called nodes. Each of these centers will link with at least five community treatment programs in their region.

- NEW ENGLAND NODE: Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
- DELAWARE VALLEY NODE: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- MID-ATLANTIC NODE: The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond.
- PACIFIC REGION NODE: University of California at Los Angeles.
- NORTHWEST NODE: Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland, Ore.

The CTN, which was announced in January 1999 with a call for grant applications, was recommended by the 1998 Institute of Medicine report, *Bridging the Gap Between Research and Practice*, as the single mechanism most likely to improve drug abuse treatment in this country. When complete, the network will consist of 20 to 30 regional research treatment centers (RRTC). At the local level, each center will be linked with 10 to 15 community-based treatment programs (CTP) that represent a variety of treatment settings and patient populations available in that particular region of the country.

Each RRTC will work in concert to conduct multisite clinical trials research. They will deliver and test an array of behavioral and pharmacological treatments and determine conditions under which novel treatments are successfully adopted. Most studies to be conducted will span multiple sites, populations and geographic regions. It is expected that each CTP will be a full partner in decision making about research directions and activities.

The Clinical Trials Network Unit was established as a new office within NIDA effective October 1, 1999. Dr. Betty Tai has been appointed as Director of the CTN. Direct inquiries regarding programmatic issues should go to Betty Tai, Ph.D., at (301) 443-2397, e-mail: bt26r@nih.gov.

The Mid-ATTC, from VCU, will function as a subcontractor to Johns Hopkins University, to facilitate the participation of 5 proposed Virginia Community Partners. These include Norfolk CSB, District 19 CSB, Region Ten CSB, Chesterfield CSB, and Henrico MHMR Services. Each of these CTPs will be involved in the development and implementation of research studies appropriate to them. For more information, see the Clinical Trials website at <http://www.nida.nih.gov/ClinicalTrials.html>, which was the source of today's text, or contact Dr. Paula Horvatic at the Mid-ATTC.

We hope you find *Addiction Exchange* useful in your work. Please let us know about your information needs by emailing the editor of *Addiction Exchange*, Dr. Karen Ingersoll, at kingerso@vcu.edu, or discuss your training needs by contacting the Mid-ATTC at (804) 828-9910; (804) 828-7862 Fax; email: mid-attc@mindspring.com. Mid-ATTC's website address is <http://www.mid-attc.org/>

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