



National Institute on Drug Abuse  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/>

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**NIH and VA Announce \$7 Million Partnership for Substance Abuse Research among  
Military Personnel, Veterans and their Families**

*Research will focus on war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan*

Washington, D.C. – Two federal departments have joined forces to create a first-time collaborative funding project to support research on substance abuse and associated problems among U.S. military personnel, veterans and their families. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, in partnership with two other NIH Institutes--the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and the National Cancer Institute (NCI)--are jointly collaborating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), on a seven million dollar funding opportunity announcement for research in this area. NIH is the leading scientific agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

There is a growing awareness that returning military personnel —whatever their overseas role— need help confronting a variety of war related problems including traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and substance abuse, including tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Many of these problems are interconnected, and contribute to individual health and family relationship crises, yet there has been little research on how to prevent and treat the unique characteristics of wartime related substance abuse issues. The funding opportunity announcement will focus on the causes, screening and identification, prevention and treatment of substance use and abuse--including alcohol, tobacco and other drugs--and associated problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Active duty military personnel and the community of veterans have sacrificed so much for our country that we owe them nothing less than the best that research can offer,” said Acting NIH Director Raynard S. Kington, M.D., Ph.D.

This funding opportunity announcement was prompted by a meeting held in January to gain a better understanding of the substance abuse intervention needs of military personnel, veterans,

and their families and develop recommendations for prevention and treatment research priorities in this area. This is the first post-meeting announcement and is specific to those serving, or who have served, in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Working in collaboration with key federal agencies, we hope to learn more about how to address the array of social and emotional problems caused by the trauma of war that bring so much pain to soldiers and their families,” said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow. “Even though they are no longer in combat, many of these brave men and women are now fighting substance addiction—another dangerous enemy.”

“The transition period as soldiers withdraw from battlefield stress and face the rigors of re-adjusting to life at home can be a critical turning point,” said NIAAA Acting Director Kenneth Warren. “This partnership will enhance our efforts to find solutions to the complex alcohol and substance abuse problems that plague our soldiers and their families.”

The grant applications submitted will be reviewed by an NIH review panel that includes scientific expertise regarding substance abuse and associated conditions. Each agency will fund grants relevant to its mission. NIDA will fund \$2 million, NIAAA \$2 million, NCI \$1 million and the VA \$2 million.

As the research evolves, the VA will look for new tools to confront a complex cascade of problems which increasingly threaten the medical and physical health of its patients.

Dr. Joel Kupersmith, the VA’s chief research and development officer, comments, “VA has long supported a strong research program for veterans, and this request for applications provides the opportunity to clearly focus on essential issues encountered by the newest generation of veterans in conjunction with federal partners.”

Research questions related to all phases of the deployment cycle (i.e., pre-deployment, deployment, re-integration, and separation) and all branches of the military (e.g., Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, U.S. Military Reserves, National Guard) and veterans are of interest. The deadline for grant applications is December 22, 2009.

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) – VA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD) aspires to discover knowledge, develop VA researchers and health care leaders, and create innovations that advance health care for our veterans and the nation. For more information about VA Research: <http://www.research.va.gov>.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, part of the NIH, is the primary U.S. agency for conducting and supporting research on the causes, consequences, prevention, and treatment of alcohol abuse, alcoholism, and alcohol problems, and disseminates research findings to general, professional, and academic audiences. Additional alcohol research information and publications are available at [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov).

NCI leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH effort to dramatically reduce the burden of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI Web site at <http://www.cancer.gov> or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).

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 inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov). To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's new DrugPubs research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or [drugpubs@nida.nih.gov](mailto:drugpubs@nida.nih.gov). Online ordering is available at <http://drugpubs.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](http://www.nih.gov).