

Millions of Americans will benefit from access to services

For Immediate Release - Alexandria, VA

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NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, announces their support for the legislation to be introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) on Thursday, October 27, 2005. This legislation intends to relieve one of the many hardships inflicted on millions of Americans by the recent spate of hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region.

Under current federal regulations, people with drug convictions on their records face the possible suspension or revocation of certain social services provided by the federal government, such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), food stamps or government housing. Federal student loans can also be denied to drug offenders. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma have made life quite difficult along the Gulf Coast, and its victims are in desperate need of government assistance. Rep. Scott's legislation will temporarily narrow these roadblocks on government assistance to former drug offenders living in the Gulf Coast region, as they too are in dire need of the government's help and care.

"Mr. Scott's legislation is necessary for many reasons," said Andrew Kessler, Director of Government Relations for NAADAC. "Not only will it make life just a little easier for some of the unfortunate victims of the recent hurricanes, but it will also put a spotlight on the federal government's current policies. We hope that this can be the beginning of a move towards policies that encourage treatment and care for drug offenders, and policies that reflect an understanding of the complexities of drug addiction. We commend Mr. Scott and the bill's other supporters for taking on this urgent and necessary situation."

In partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Westover Consulting, Inc., NAADAC is sending 120 addiction professionals, all of whom are NAADAC members, to Louisiana to assist with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. In the aftermath of the hurricane, thousands of people need help in dealing with their present situation, whether it is addiction counseling, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide prevention or mental health treatment.