

## Proposed Legislation Would Place Emphasis on Addiction

For Immediate Release - Alexandria, VA

Donovan Kuehn  
703-741-7686, ext. 125  
[dkuehn@naadac.org](mailto:dkuehn@naadac.org)

New legislation introduced by Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.) would change the names of the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) (NIDA) and the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) (NIAAA) to reflect current research indicating that addiction is a treatable, neurobiological disease.

The bill, S. 1011, was introduced on March 29 and referred to the Senate's Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. The legislation is expected to pass Congress later this year. A companion bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.), who has also introduced the "parity" bill which would eliminate insurance discrimination against people with addictions.

Biden's proposed legislation would rename NIDA the National Institute on Diseases of Addiction and NIAAA would become the National Institute on Alcohol Disorders and Health (NIADH).

"Addiction is a neurobiological disease - not a lifestyle choice - and it's about time we start treating it as such," said [Sen. Biden](#). "We must lead by example? By changing the way we talk about addiction, we change the way people think about addiction, both of which are critical steps in getting past the social stigma too often associated with the disease."

Biden referred to the term "abuse" as "pejorative" because it feeds the stigma that people "choose" their addiction.

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, has signed letters in support of the name-change legislation.

"National survey results that shown that a majority of the general public believes that addiction is a personal or moral weakness," said NAADAC Executive Director [Cynthia Moreno Tuohy](#), NCAC II, CCDC III, SAP. "This is a positive step of official recognition that stigma remains a treatment barrier for the more than 18 million Americans who have the disease of addiction."

Both NIDA and NIAAA are considered the leading addiction research organizations in the world. NIDA was established in 1974 with the mission to "lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction." Its budget is just over \$1 billion. NIAAA traces its history back to 1970 and aims "to support and promote the best science on alcohol and health for the benefit of all." NIAAA receives about \$440 million annually.

Sen. Biden was named *NAADAC Legislator of the Year* at the March 2007 Advocacy Action conference for his career-long support of addiction services professionals. Rep. Kennedy delivered the conference's keynote address and was a recipient of the 2007 NAADAC President's Award.