

For Immediate Release - Alexandria, VA

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This week, the U.S. Senate approved the omnibus spending bill funding most federal agencies for the current fiscal year, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, which includes \$100,000 for NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals, to cover the initial costs of launching the Ohio Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Resource Center. Having passed the House of Representatives in December, the bill is now cleared for the President's signature.

This Center's funding, which is allocated within the budget for the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, was requested by several members of the Ohio Congressional delegation and will serve numerous Ohio communities.

The Center could address the recruitment, retention, training, and career advancement of Ohio alcohol and other drug treatment and prevention professionals by: (1) developing Internet-based career development resources, including continuing education and training programs; and (2) holding educational events on these issues in Ohio.

Rather than bricks and mortar, the Center will initially have a virtual base. The Center will also include a network of addiction-focused Ohio organizations that NAADAC will actively engage. The Center is designed to serve as a national model and could be replicated in other States if it is successful.

NAADAC sought the federal appropriation in conjunction with its Ohio affiliate -- the Ohio Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors -- and the Ohio Council on Behavioral Health Care Providers. Congressional support came from Senator George Voinovich, Senator Mike DeWine (who chairs the Senate Subcommittee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health), Congressman Ralph Regula (who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and Congressman David Hobson. Key support also came from Ohio First Lady Hope Taft, who is a trained AOD professional, and from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

"Ohio is well-positioned to play a leadership role in developing new ways to recruit, train, and

U.S. Senate Approves \$100,000 for Ohio Alcohol and Drug Counselors Training Project

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retain addiction professionals, given the strong state organizations, the leadership of Ohio's First Lady Hope Taft, and the Congressional delegation, which has demonstrated its ability to find critical resources in a challenging budgetary environment," said NAADAC Executive Director Pat Ford-Roegner.