
NIDA NOTES

Drug Abuse and AIDS

Volume 13, Number 5 (February, 1999)

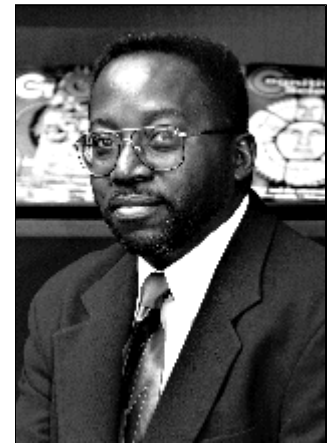
New NIDA Center Will Address Health Issues Associated With Drug Abuse

By **Barbara Cire**, NIDA NOTES Associate Editor

NIDA has established a new center to coordinate research, collaborate with other of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) institutes and related organizations, and provide leadership to NIDA offices and divisions on issues about HIV/AIDS and other medical consequences of drug abuse. The Center for AIDS and Other Medical Consequences of Drug Abuse, headed by **Dr. Henry Francis** (*below, right*), was established through a merger of NIDA's Office on AIDS and Clinical Medical Branch, but its mission and responsibilities go beyond those of these two components.

"The new Center represents an important initiative to increase NIDA's multidisciplinary drug abuse research," says NIDA Director Dr. Alan I. Leshner. "The Center will allow us to address the full spectrum of health issues associated with drug abuse, including HIV/AIDS."

The Center will develop multidisciplinary national and international programs on HIV/AIDS; the medical, health, and developmental consequences of drug abuse; and the effects of drug use on other diseases. Program areas include the origins, treatment, and prevention of hepatitis C; HIV disease progression; the links between drug abuse treatment and medical care; tuberculosis in drug users; clinical research on human development and drug abuse; and prescription drug abuse.



"The connection between HIV/AIDS and injection drug use is well-known," says Dr. Francis. "Now is the time to step up our examination of that connection as well as the connections between drug abuse and other diseases related to drug abuse, including hepatitis, tuberculosis, hypertension, and sexually transmitted diseases in addition to AIDS. A number of mental health conditions also are associated with drug abuse, including severe depression, schizophrenia, personality disorders, and manic-depressive disorder. Sometimes mental health problems precede drug abuse, but in other cases they co-occur with drug abuse. It is important to address the impact of these disorders on drug abuse and the impact of drug abuse on these disorders."

The Center is currently supporting several collaborative studies with other NIH Institutes and government agencies, as well as nongovernment groups. For example, NIDA is participating in the Women's Interagency HIV Study/HIV Epidemiology Research Study with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This study is examining the medical and

psychosocial impact of HIV on women. NIDA is also collaborating with NIAID and NICHD on the Women and Infants Transmission Study, which is investigating mother-to-infant transmission of HIV.

"Drug addiction is a cross-over disease that permeates virtually all of the research areas addressed by NIH," says Dr. Francis. "Thus, a multidisciplinary approach is best suited to exploring the health aspects of drug abuse."

Prior to this appointment, Dr. Francis served for 2 years as chief of the Clinical Medicine Branch in the Division of Clinical and Services Research at NIDA. He was the director of the U.S. Public Health Service and Belgium Projet SIDA (Project AIDS) Research Laboratories in Kinshasa, Zaire, from 1984 to 1988. Dr. Francis received his medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine and performed his clinical training in internal medicine at the Long Beach Veterans' Administration Department of Medicine at the University of California at Irvine. He was a fellow, and later assistant professor, in the Division of Infectious Diseases at The Johns Hopkins Medical School. He is widely published and has written articles on HIV/AIDS that have appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Lancet*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of Immunology*, and the *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, among others.

NIDA NOTES - Volume 13, Number 5

[\[NIDA Home Page\]](#)[\[Search Site\]](#)[\[Site Index\]](#)[\[NIDA NOTES Index\]](#)[\[Index of this Issue\]](#)