

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NCADD-New Jersey launches Recovery Voices Count Campaign

TRENTON ... (September 25, 2008) – The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey (NCADD-NJ) launched its Recovery Voices Count (RVC) Campaign at a State House press conference today. New Jersey is among 10 states selected to take part in the national campaign, which seeks to build an addiction recovery constituency in each of the participating states through voter registration and education and will conduct a get-out-the-vote initiative. As part of the campaign launch, NCADD-NJ released Decision 2008, its annual election guide and candidate survey focusing on issues such as expanding addiction treatment capacity in the state and addressing the stigma that confronts people with an addiction as well as those in recovery from addiction.

NCADD-NJ and the grassroots organization it supports, Friends of Addiction Recovery-New Jersey (FOAR-NJ), are coordinating the project in the state. John Hulick, NCADD-NJ's director of Public Policy, said "Through Recovery Voices Count, we will build a constituency of consequence that will let legislators know how widespread a problem addiction is and advocate for policies that will address the need for treatment and confront discrimination."

Recovery Voices Count was developed by the national organization Faces and Voices of Recovery, which seeks to have the addiction recovery community speak with a unified voice. The impetus for Recovery Voices Count is the unprecedented interest in this year's presidential race. NCADD-NJ and FOAR-NJ were selected because they have already demonstrated strong issues education and advocacy components. Existing county chapters of FOAR-NJ will be bolstered with the establishment in other parts of the state. The ultimate goal will be for each of New Jersey's legislative districts to have a chapter that will amplify the voice of recovery to advocate for issues such as expanding care to meet the state's treatment shortfall.

NCADD-NJ and FOAR-NJ are well on their way to meeting their Recovery Voices Count Goal of registering 1,000 new voters. In the days leading up to Election Day, the campaign will conduct a get out the vote effort to ensure the recovery electorate goes to the polls. Additionally, candidate pledges have been sent to each Congressional candidate offices

offices. NCADD-NJ has considerable experience questioning candidates on addiction issues, having sent surveys to Congressional and state Senate and Assembly candidates as part of the Election Guide it has produced for the past seven years.

The project will also focus on a voter education effort, another area in which NCADD-NJ has a long history, having developing materials to inform state residents about issues such as youth alcohol use. Through its Think Advocacy network, the agency has communicated to the state's lawmakers on mental health and addiction parity, increasing the state's alcohol tax to fund treatment and expanding drug court. Recovery Voices Count will aim to build on this record.

In addition to New Jersey, the other participants in Recovery Voices Count are Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Austin, Texas, and San Francisco.

Anyone interested in joining New Jersey's Recovery Voices Count effort should contact Jeanette Grimes at 609-477-7012 or jgrimes@ncaddnj.org.

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