

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – New Jersey
360 Corporate Boulevard, Robbinsville, NJ 08691

CONTACT: Daniel Meara
609.477-7011
dmeara@ncaddnj.org

NCADD-New Jersey, FOAR-NJ head state Recovery Voices Count effort

TRENTON ... (April 17, 2008) – New Jersey is among 10 states chosen to take part in an addiction recovery advocacy effort known as Recovery Voices Count. The initiative will build an addictions recovery constituency in each of the participating states through voter registration and education and a get-out-the-vote initiative, drawing in part from people in recovery and their families and friends. 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 National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-New Jersey (NCADD-NJ) and the grassroots organization it supports, Friends of Addiction Recovery-New Jersey (FOAR-NJ), will oversee the project in the state. Tom Coderre, Faces and Voices of Recovery's national field director, and Aaron Kucharski, the organization's field director, will visit the 10 states and work with representatives from the participating state organizations.

The impetus for Recovery Voices Count is the unprecedented political interest stirred by this year's presidential primaries. 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 have set a preliminary goal of registering 1,000 new voters, and then to have at least 85 percent of the recovery constituency cast votes on Election Day, which is Nov. 4. At the FOAR-NJ-sponsored Recovery Rally held last September in Jersey City, a Take Action tent registered voters throughout the day.

Additionally, candidate pledges will be sent to Congressional candidate offices as well as to Presidential campaign

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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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