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Dr. Wilson Compton named Deputy Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse

Wilson Compton, M.D., M.P.E., a nationally known expert on the causes and prevention of drug abuse, has been appointed the Deputy Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA,) part of the National Institutes of Health. The announcement was made today by the Institute Director, Dr. Nora Volkow.



Dr. Compton has served as the Director of NIDA's Division of Epidemiology, Services and Prevention Research since 2002. As Division Director, he has managed a complex research program of national and international scope addressing the extent and causes of drug abuse and the development of effective prevention strategies. He has also coordinated innovative research designed to strengthen addiction treatment services through improved organizational and financial infrastructure. In addition, Dr. Compton has been a member of the DSM-5 Task Force and the Substance Use Disorders Workgroup for the past five years.

"I look forward to working with Dr. Compton as NIDA responds to growing challenges in the substance abuse research field," said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. "In more than a decade as a Division Director here at NIDA, he has built a formidable team supporting research into the extent and causes of substance abuse, with a strong focus on tobacco, prescription and illicit drug abuse. His passion is unwavering, and his enthusiasm to use science to find improved approaches to substance abuse management will inspire us all."

Recently, Dr. Compton has been leading an effort jointly sponsored by NIDA and the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products to field a large scale longitudinal population study to assess the impact of new tobacco regulations. This landmark study is expected to include over 50,000 persons in the U.S. ages 12 and older with yearly data collection from study participants, including both surveys and biological assessments of tobacco exposures, risk factors and health outcomes. He will continue to be involved in this effort in his new role.

"I am so excited to be working with Dr. Volkow and the entire NIDA team to use drug abuse science to improve health. Applying the newest scientific techniques to understanding and solving problems related to drug abuse is challenging, fascinating and essential," said Compton. "NIDA is a wonderful place to work, and our scientific mission is critical as we face multiple issues in our communities related to addictions. I am really pleased to help Dr. Volkow surmount these challenges in leading this dynamic and fantastic organization."

In October 2013, Dr. Compton was one of ten people to receive the Health and Human Services Secretary's Award for Meritorious Service, which recognizes employees for their sustained excellence and for inspiring others to improve their performance. Dr. Compton was recognized for outstanding cross-agency collaborations, linking NIDA with multiple Health and Human Services and outside agencies to reduce tobacco use and prescription drug abuse, and to improve substance abuse prevention and treatment systems

Prior to joining NIDA, Dr. Compton was Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Master in Psychiatric Epidemiology Program at Washington University in Saint Louis as well as Medical Director of Addiction Services at the Barnes-Jewish Hospital in Saint Louis. Dr. Compton received his undergraduate education from Amherst College. He attended medical school and completed his residency training in psychiatry at Washington University.

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The National Institute on Drug Abuse is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy and improve practice. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs of abuse and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found on the NIDA home page at www.drugabuse.gov, which is now compatible with your smartphone, iPad or tablet. To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's DrugPubs research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or fax or email requests to 240-645-0227 or drugpubs@nida.nih.gov. Online ordering is available at <http://drugpubs.drugabuse.gov>. NIDA's media guide can be found at <http://drugabuse.gov/mediaguide/>, and its new easy-to-read website can be found at www.easyread.drugabuse.gov.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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