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Contact: NIDA Press Office
301-443-6245
media@nida.nih.gov

NIDA creates easy-to-read website on drug abuse

New site for adults with limited literacy skills, with audio versions of each page

A new, easy-to-read website on drug abuse designed for adults with a low reading literacy level (eighth grade or below) was launched today by the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) (NIDA), part of the [National Institutes of Health](#). The site, which provides plain language information on neuroscience, drug abuse prevention and treatment, is also a resource for adult literacy educators. It has a simple design with a large default text size, motion graphic videos and other features that make it easy to read and use.

“Drug abuse and addiction affects people of all reading levels, yet there are no websites with drug abuse information created specifically for adults with limited literacy,” said NIDA Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. “We hope this new site will inform a large segment of our population who may not have otherwise received potentially life-saving information.”

The website’s emphasis on plain language supports the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s commitment to clear government communication that the public can understand and use. The site goes beyond plain language by using a website design and features that are easy to use, including animated videos that explain the science of addiction and how drugs affect the brain.

The website will use the [ReadSpeaker](#) text-to-speech tool that provides audio versions of each page without the need to download any software. The embedded highlighting tool enables website visitors to see synchronized highlighting of the text that is currently being read.

Before creating the site, NIDA interviewed adults who were seeking to improve their literacy skills to learn their challenges and preferences in using websites. NIDA also worked with groups that provide services to adult learners through nonprofit organizations, libraries, and in healthcare clinics. In addition, NIDA conducted website usability testing at nonprofit organizations that serve adults seeking to improve their reading and/or earn a GED.

NIDA’s new easy-to-read site can be found at: www.easyread.drugabuse.gov. See [NIH’s Health Literacy Initiative](#) for more information and additional resources on health literacy.

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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. 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/>.

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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