

# Alcohol, Stress, and the Brain: Implications for Treatment and Recovery

*A Congressional Briefing Sponsored by*  
**The Friends of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

*In cooperation with*  
The Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus & the Military Mental Health Caucus

**Thursday, May 5, 2016**  
**12:00 – 1:30 PM**  
(lunch will be available)

**Rayburn House Office Building**  
**Room B-369**

Stress is everywhere and an intimate part of modern life. Some individuals choose to cope with stress by turning to alcohol. Although alcohol may seem to provide temporary relief, drinking too much too often can have the opposite effect. Studies show that excessive drinking causes dysfunction of the brain's stress systems and makes people more sensitive to stress. These changes play a significant role in the development and perpetuation of alcohol use disorder (AUD). Moreover, alcohol problems frequently co-occur with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a condition that is especially prevalent among our nation's military personnel, veterans, and victims of violence, including sexual assault. An estimated 30-60 percent of patients seeking treatment for AUD meet criteria for PTSD, and approximately one-third of individuals who have had PTSD have had AUD at some point in their lives. This briefing will explore the link between alcohol and stress and highlight recent research findings with implications for preventing and treating AUD and co-occurring PTSD.

## Speakers

**George F. Koob, Ph.D.**, Director, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), NIH, will provide an overview of NIAAA-supported research on alcohol and stress and discuss the common neurocircuitry underlying AUD and PTSD.

**Rajita Sinha, Ph.D.**, Foundations Fund Professor in Psychiatry, Neurobiology and Child Study, Director, Yale Interdisciplinary Stress Center, Chief, Psychology Section in Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine, will discuss alcohol effects on the brain stress pathways and its impact on managing stress and alcohol craving during treatment and early recovery.

**Anthony Doran**, Peer Support Specialist, Vets4Warriors, and a veteran of the Afghan campaign, will discuss his PTSD and alcohol use disorder diagnoses and personal journey through recovery.

## Sponsoring Organizations

Alkermes – American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry - American Academy of Pediatrics - American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases - American College of Neuropsychopharmacology - American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists - American Psychiatric Association - American Psychological Association - American Society of Addiction Medicine – Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC) - Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America - Community of Concern – Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility – Federation of Associations of Behavioral and Brain Sciences - Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse – Hepatitis Foundation International - IC&RC – International Society on Addictions – National Association for Children of Alcoholics - National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors - National Council for Behavioral Health – National Foundation for Prevention of Chemical Dependency Disease - National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation - Phoenix House—Research Society on Alcoholism – Society for Prevention Research, Inc. - Society for Research in Child Development - University of Florida, Department of Psychiatry

**[Please RSVP Here.](#) Contact Cynthia Malley ([cmalley@apa.org](mailto:cmalley@apa.org)) with any further questions.**