

Canada's new drug strategy respects UN conventions, says UNODC director

Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, says Canada's new drug strategy, which includes a plan to reform existing cannabis laws, conforms with the UN's three main international agreements on drugs. Mr. Costa's remarks appeared in a Montreal newspaper during an official visit to Canada that began with a CCSA Board dinner at which he was guest speaker.

In his speech, delivered just five days after the May 27 announcement of the drug strategy, Mr. Costa praised the Canadian government and CCSA for their support of the UNODC. But he warned that "no message should go out implying de-escalation of the severity of the cannabis problem, at a time when cannabis's potency has increased dramatically." Mr. Costa later told *LeDevoir* that the proposed 15-gram threshold (under the new law those caught with less than this quantity of marijuana would be fined rather than charged with a criminal offence) was too high.

CCSA supported the long-awaited proposal to reform Canada's cannabis



► (Top): Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, addressed a CCSA gathering and later chatted with special guests, including Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell. (Below, left to right): CCSA Board chair Barry King; Mr. Costa; Raf Souccar, Chief Superintendent, Drugs and Organized Crime, RCMP; and Michel Pelletier, National Coordinator, Drug Awareness Service, RCMP.

laws, but said the change will have to be closely monitored under the new drug strategy. Under the strategy, CCSA will play a pivotal role in coordinating national studies to determine patterns of drug use, including cannabis, and related problems among adolescent and adult popula-

tions. These national prevalence studies, which haven't been done in Canada since 1994, will be critical in assessing the ongoing impact of changes to cannabis legislation and in setting priorities for addressing the harm related to all forms of substance abuse, said

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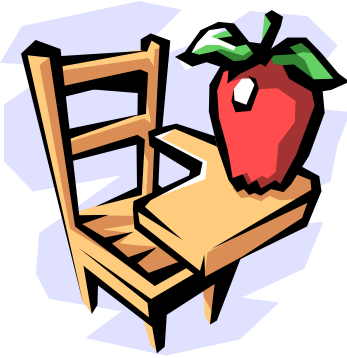
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Partner in





►The results of the survey were surprising given that youth prevention efforts in Canada focus primarily on the classroom. CCSA will follow up on these preliminary results over the course of the three-year Community Action Program, funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre.

Survey questions effectiveness of prevention in schools

A survey exploring the strengths and weaknesses of community responses to substance abuse gives poor marks to school-based prevention efforts. The survey, based on interviews with 40 key individuals affiliated with the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) and the Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) network, was conducted as part of a three-year project to design a model for identifying and developing community response initiatives (see story below and *Action News* Vol. XIII No. 1 for more details).

Although prevention and treatment were rated as the most effective approaches to substance abuse in the com-

munity, respondents were far less positive about prevention in schools. The only approach that was viewed as

Prevention in schools received an even poorer rating from rural respondents who were also more likely to rate substance abuse as a “very serious” problem.

being less effective was “uncoordinated efforts” (19% of responses vs. 16% who judged school-based prevention as the least effective). Among other ap-

proaches considered to be least effective were “law enforcement” (11%) and “focusing on only one type of response” (8%).

Prevention in schools received an even poorer rating from rural respondents, who were also more likely to rate substance abuse as a “very serious” problem (64%) than their counterparts with national affiliations (47%) or in urban centres (33%). Rural community representatives were also more likely to identify substance abuse, crime and victimization as being “directly related” (73%) than either urban or national respondents (54% each).

A detailed account of the survey is available at the Community Action Project site at www.ccsa.ca/ncpc/ □



►**Mona Wynn:** looking forward to combining her social research experience with her enthusiasm for community-based action. You can contact Mona at mwynn@ccsa.ca

New coordinator hired for HEP and CCENDU projects

Mona Wynn has joined CCSA in a dual position as National CCENDU Coordinator and as CCENDU/HEP Community Action Project Coordinator. In the first role, Mona will be responsible for ongoing support and development of CCENDU (Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use) monitoring sites across Canada.

The second job, linking CCENDU with the Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) network, involves recruiting and supporting 15 new sites

to produce CCENDU reports and to take action on substance abuse at the local level. This project, funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, will identify a community response model to substance abuse and document the lessons learned throughout the project’s three-year lifespan. CCENDU will collect project data and HEP will turn the data into action through community response initiatives.

Mona, who grew up in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, has a strong background in social re-

search, project coordination and community development. Her first job after graduate school at Dalhousie University was to set up a research unit for a social planning council. From there, she moved into project coordination and community development work in the health promotion field. She has spent a number of years as an independent consultant, developing tobacco-use reduction resources. Mona has recently returned to Ottawa after completing a research project for the Children’s Aid Society of Halifax. □

Florence Kellner brings research expertise to CCSA

Florence Kellner is CCSA's newest associate under an ongoing agreement between Carleton University and CCSA aimed at forging closer links between the addictions field and the academic world. Dr. Kellner is a professor of Sociology in Carleton's department of Sociology and Anthropology and was formerly chair of the department. She specializes in alcohol research of all types and teaches courses in deviant behaviour, alcohol

and drug studies, and qualitative methodology.

Dr. Kellner is helping CCSA with a variety of projects linking research findings to public communication and social policy. At the request of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), she and CCSA's director of policy and research Patricia Begin reviewed Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines to determine whether they are an appropriate standard for older drinkers. The guidelines were origi-

nally released in 1997 by CCSA and the former Addiction Research Foundation (now CAMH). She also assisted in planning for a new Canadian drug use prevalence study to be conducted by CCSA and the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions.

More recently, Prof. Kellner helped develop an information piece on driving under the influence of cannabis. Copies of *Cannabis and Driving FAQs* are available from info@ccsa.ca. □



►Florence Kellner is CCSA's newest associate. She received her PhD from Rutgers University and did most of her graduate work at the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies.

Still alive and well, CSAIN gears up for new projects

The Canadian Substance Abuse Information Network (CSAIN), a loosely knit group of addictions information specialists from across the country, met in Toronto in the spring to plan future initiatives. Despite funding cutbacks and the closure of some substance abuse libraries in Canada in recent years, a surprising number of new CSAIN members attended the meeting, says CCSA's

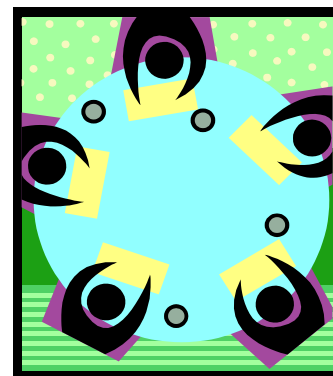
Director of Information and Reference Services Nina Frey. Participants were given a brief history of the network and encouraged to brainstorm on possible collaborative projects. Top initiatives to emerge were:

- Use of the CSAIN Web site (www.ccsa.ca/csaine.htm) to share and contribute to a new thesaurus developed by CCSA's National Clearinghouse on Substance Abuse,
- Mapping of the addictions

infrastructure in each province to provide a national snapshot of all facets of addictions interventions, and

- Creation of a substance abuse acronym database as a means of "taming" an otherwise extremely changeable set of titles/names.

Work on these projects is now under way and volunteers are welcome. Please contact Karen Palmer (kpalmer@ccsa.ca) for further information. □



►CSAIN is a consortium of the major libraries and resource centres that disseminate substance abuse and addictions information in Canada.

CECA launches first national prevalence study since 1994

The Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA) has launched the first national adult illicit drug prevalence survey in Canada since 1994. The survey enters the field in October with a minimum sample of 1,000 individuals in each of 10 provinces. Initial findings are expected in March, 2004 and will help

support implementation of Canada's new drug strategy. Details of the survey will appear on CECA's new Web site, to be launched soon. You will be able to find the address by going to www.ccsa.ca and following the Networks link.

CECA marked its first year of operation at a recent Board meeting in Prince Edward Island. The organization has

been moving strongly onto the national scene, expanding membership, developing partnerships and undertaking projects. It appeared before the Parliamentary Committee on Non-Medical Use of Drugs, the Standing Committee on Finance, and in other public forums to advocate for the new national drug strategy. □



►CECA was founded in 2002 as a forum for developing common positions on addictions issues, and for strengthening the capacity of addictions executives.

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CCSA's Chief Executive Officer Michel Perron.

CCSA will also lead the organization of a national conference every two years to gather input from key players in the addictions field on priorities for future action to reduce addictions-related harm. In addition, CCSA will produce an annual "state-of-the-union" report on addictions in Canada and will play a central role in establishing a national research strategy. CCSA will host a national

research priorities forum in October, 2003

Mr. Perron said the new strategy will strengthen Canada's commitment to prevention, education and treatment – key parts of the strategy, along with increased enforcement of laws against drug trafficking.

"We are pleased to see that the strategy provides critical resources to allow for greater investment in efforts that prevent substance abuse while ensuring that those in need get appropriate care, support and treatment," he said. □

CCSA welcomes new Board members

Two new directors have joined CCSA's Board.

Beverley Clarke is Chief Executive Officer of Health and Community Services, Saint John's Region, Newfoundland and Labrador. She has held various senior positions within the Department of Health and Community Services, including Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Policy and Planning; ADM of Community Health; and Director of Addictions Services.

Normand "Rusty" Beauchesne joined the Toronto Police Service in 1976 and attained the rank of Detective before graduating from Osgoode Hall law School in 1983. In 1989 he became civilian legal advisor to the Toronto police and was director of the Legal Services Unit when he retired in 2002. He joined the National Parole Board of Canada in February 2002.

Detailed CCSA Board résumés are available at www.ccsa.ca/BoardBio.htm □



► New faces: **Beverley Clarke** (Newfoundland) and **Rusty Beauchesne** (Ontario)

Events

► For more details on these and other events, please visit www.ccsa.ca and follow the links for Resources and Calendar of Events.

Oct 19-24 – 46th International Conference on the Prevention and Treatment of Dependencies. Westin Prince, 900 York Mills Road, Toronto. Web site: www.icaa.ch Contact: e-mail: secretariat@icaa.ch; reservations@torontoprince.com; tel.: +41 21 320 9865 Fax: +41 21 320-981

Oct 24 – Calgary FASD Forum and Resource Fair. Calgary, AB. E-mail: calgary-fasd@shaw.ca. Web site: www.calgaryfasd.com/forum.html

Oct 26-29 – Toxicomanie et dépendances associées. Hôtel Delta Trois-Rivières. Courriel : info@aitq.com. Site web : www.aitq.com/colloq.htm tél : (450) 646-3271

Nov 16-18 – 15th Canadian Biennial Symposium on Employee and Family Assistance Programs In the Workplace. Fairmont Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, ON. Web site: www.humber.on.ca/~input Contact: e-mail: teresa.sottile@humber.ca; tel.: (416) 675-6622 ext. 559

Nov 16-22 – National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW)/Drug Awareness Week (DAW). CCSA will include details of NAAW/DAW activities from across Canada on the Centre's Web site at www.ccsa.ca

Nov 19-21 – 2003 Canada Northwest FASD Conference Our Communities...Our Strength. Winnipeg, MB. E-mail: linda@plannersplus.ca Web site: fasconference.ca Tel: (204) 255-2244 Fax: (204) 254-0716

Dec 2-3 – The Cost of Drugs. The Congress Centre, London, UK. E-mail: conferences@drugscope.org.uk Tel: 00 44 20 7922 8691 Web site: www.drugscope.org.uk/events.asp?a=1&intID=613#613

Dec 4-6 – 5th Methadone and Other Substitutive Therapies, Pietrasanta, Italy. Web site: www.europad.org/conf2003.asp Contact: e-mail: aucns.onlus@inwind.it

Dec 10-12 – National Conference on Tobacco or Health, Boston. Web site: www.tobaccocontrolconference.org Contact: e-mail: conferenceinfo@northropgrumman.com; tel.: (301) 294-5664

Dec 12 – Profiting from cocaine: a growing addiction. The Royal Society of Medicine, London, UK. Web site: www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/242-cocaine.htm E-mail: jennifer.lake@rsm.ac.uk Tel: 00 44 20 7290 3919 Fax: 00 44 20 7290 2977

April 22-23 – VI European Opiate Addiction Treatment Association Conference. Paris, France. Web site: www.europad.org E-mail: maremman@med.unipi.it

June 3-5 – 13th International Symposium on HIV and Emerging Infectious Diseases: A World in Motion. International Congress Center Toulon, France. Web site: www.avps.org/2003/hiv.htm

Jürgen Rehm wins 2003 Jellinek

Jürgen Rehm, a senior scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), has received the 2003 Jellinek Memorial Award, the most prestigious international award for alcohol research. Dr. Rehm received the award for "exemplary research contributions of fundamental importance in alcohol epidemiology and for international

leadership in the application of state-of-the-art methods in population studies". The award was presented at the annual meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism in Florida in June. Six Canadian researchers have won the Jellinek in the past: H. David Archibald, Yedi Israel, Harold Kalant, Robert Popham, Robin Room and Wolfgang Schmidt. □