**U.S. Government (NIH) Endorses Alternatives To AA**

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Los Angeles (PRWEB) March 13, 2009 -- The U.S. government just announced newly revised guidelines, with the launch of its "Rethinking Drinking" website, regarding the consumption of alcohol.

The extensive site supports the concept of the viability of non-12 Step programs to help people stop drinking. According to Marc Kern, Ph.D., this new approach is a long awaited and beneficial change in the way the NIH (National Institutes of Health) approaches alcohol treatment and recovery.

"Millions of people have been avoiding any sort of help for their drinking because they weren't willing to embrace the "black or white notions" that permeate the 12-Step program," Kern said. "Now the government is saying that there are effective options."

Dr. Kern is a founding father of SMART Recovery, one of the alternatives included on the NIH Website.

For decades, problem drinkers have been steered exclusively to Alcoholics Anonymous by state and local courts, and the prison system. For many people the A.A. structure and belief system simply doesn't work.

"In my opinion, countless people see their alcohol problems get worse because they aren't willing to accept the powerlessness and religious overtones of the dominant A.A. model," says Kern.

SMART Recovery® (Self Management And Recovery Training) teaches individuals how to attain and maintain abstinence from addictive behaviors (substances or activities). The program offers specific tools and techniques for each of the program points:

**Point 1: Enhancing and Maintaining Motivation to Abstain**
**Point 2: Coping with Urges**
**Point 3: Problem Solving (Managing thoughts, feelings & behaviors)**
**Point 4: Lifestyle Balance (Balancing momentary & enduring satisfaction)**

SMART Recovery a free mutual-help group is consistent with the idea that "even heavy drinkers are able to change on their own" according to to Mark Willenbring, MD., director of NIAAA's Division of Treatment and Recovery Research.

The "Rethinking Drinking" site supports several other alternatives stating, "If one approach doesn't work, try something else. If a setback happens, get back on track as quickly as possible. In the long run, your chances for success are good."

Dr. Kern is very encouraged by the updated NIH approach, stating that "This will finally give people a government sanctioned choice."

Marc Kern, Ph.D. is a practicing addiction therapist who appeared on 20-20 and Larry King live among
numerous radio and TV shows. He is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who uses cognitive therapy to help people manage and overcome addictions. He came to his profession after overcoming his own serious struggle with alcoholism. He is also co-author of "Responsible Drinking," among other publications.

Dr. Kern is available for interviews on the topic of addiction recovery alternatives.

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