



HEALTH AWARENESS

Treatment Offers New Hope For Millions With Alcohol Dependence



(NAPSA)—New medicines in development may offer hope to 18 million Americans who believe they are dependent on or abuse alcohol. For years, treatment options for alcoholism have been limited, but new medicines that curb cravings may help people reduce or stop drinking and regain control of their lives.

“Many people don’t realize that alcoholism is a chronic disease much like diabetes or depression,” said David Gastfriend, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “Like other people with a chronic disease, alcoholics get better when their disease is appropriately managed—in this case, with a combination of psychotherapy and medicine.”

Alcoholism results in a broad range of health issues, including disease conditions such as liver problems, severe gastrointestinal disorders and pancreatitis, as well as public health consequences such as auto accidents, violence and a negative affect on family well-being. Symptoms of alcohol dependence include increased tol-

erance or needing to drink more frequently, withdrawal or experiencing physical symptoms, being unable to reduce or control alcohol use even when you want to and spending time drinking instead of doing other important activities.

Each year, 2.3 million alcohol-dependent people seek treatment. The most common forms of treatment are self-help groups, cognitive therapy and the use of medicines to treat withdrawal symptoms, manage cravings and reduce alcohol’s pleasurable effects. Combining medicine with therapy is now becoming more common in treating alcohol problems. New medicines for alcoholism with convenient once-monthly dosing are on the horizon. That may increase compliance with therapy.

National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month was created to recognize the successes of those in recovery and encourage those who are not in treatment to seek help. To read inspiring stories about recovery, learn more about treatment options or if you think you may be an alcoholic, visit www.recoverymonth.gov.