

# HEW NEWS

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## FEDERAL PROGRAM TO COMBAT ALCOHOLISM IN INDUSTRY ANNOUNCED

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A new Federal training program aimed at reducing the 10 percent rate of alcohol abuse and alcoholism among the Nation's work force, and curbing the \$10 billion annual industrial loss, was announced today by HEW Secretary Elliot L. Richardson.

"Most of those in trouble because of their use of alcohol are not on 'skid row'. Most people with alcohol problems are within the work force--holding down steady jobs as best they can," Secretary Richardson said.

An estimated nine million Americans are alcoholics with only three-five percent of that number so-called 'skid row' types.

Initial funding of \$295,000 will be used to train occupational alcoholism consultants. A 19-day training conference sponsored by HEW's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), began June 11 in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Two officers from each State alcoholism agency are attending. The participants are full time employees in their respective States, one working with labor, business, and industry and one working with State and local government employment systems. During the final week of the conference, Federal and military consultants will be brought in for training. The faculty, drawn from labor, management, academe, and government, is comprised of recognized experts in their respective fields.

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After the conference, the consultants will return to their States to advise employers to form programs for early identification of employees with alcohol troubles. Early identification and referral will put the employee in contact with community counseling services at a time when he is still able to hold a job and can be motivated to accept help.

Using this approach, an employer will cooperate with a nearby treatment agency, allowing the employee to continue working while receiving medical and counseling assistance.

Commenting on the new training programs, Dr. Morris E. Chafetz, Director of the new National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, a component of the Health Services and Mental Health Administration, said:

"This training conference is an important step towards achieving our principal goal of providing treatment for everyone in the United States who needs it.

"Treating occupational alcoholism is one of our top priorities because, in addition to the human suffering involved, alcoholism is costing industry \$10 billion a year. I find it most encouraging that those industries which have established programs to help drinking employees have reported recovery rates which often exceed 50 percent."

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