

A News Release of Importance from IRETA – The Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

IRETA Announces Creation of Nationally-Focused Recovery Research Center; Welcomes Alexandre Laudet, Ph.D., as Director

Pittsburgh, PA – April 19, 2010

IRETA announces the creation of a Recovery Research Center, located in Pittsburgh, whose mission is “to build a science of recovery from addiction.” Under the leadership of Alexandre Laudet, an internationally-recognized addiction recovery researcher, the Center will examine how people attain and sustain recovery from addiction, a topic still in need of scientific scrutiny and better understanding. Says Laudet, “We know how to get people to stop drugs or alcohol for a short time to satisfy a legal or immediate requirement; what we need to learn is how to *sustain* an individual in recovery and give him or her tools to heal.” Through the Center, Laudet and IRETA will conduct and disseminate the science of recovery with the goal of changing available treatment services into a more recovery-focused system of care.

The creation of the Recovery Research Center now is especially timely. “We are approaching a milestone in America with the forthcoming release of the Office of National Drug Control Policy’s [ONDCP] new drug strategy that focuses on the vital role of recovery,” explains Laudet. A growing number of federal, state and city agencies see person-centered recovery as becoming the guiding vision in addiction treatment and all medical services nationwide. However, although researchers have made substantial strides in understanding of the nature of addiction, the experience of how individuals and families come into and remain in recovery remains generally not understood as a science.

The science of addiction has historically been built on an acute-care model with treatment available only for individuals in crisis. IRETA has been instrumental in promoting the current scientific view of addiction: as more of a chronic illness that, for many, is associated with impairments in various areas of functioning and requires time —sometimes years— to improve significantly. “With Alexandre, we seek to complement the rich science of addiction developed over several decades by applying the same level of scientific rigor to the science of recovery,” says IRETA Executive Director Dr. Michael Flaherty. “Recovery is a reality for millions of Americans. And it goes beyond reducing or stopping drug and/or alcohol use; it’s also measured by an individual’s improvements in his or her quality of life.” The

Recovery Research Center will draw on these millions of experiences to deepen scientific understanding of what recovery is, how to get there, and how to stay there. “There are many paths,” says Laudet.

Laudet is a social psychologist and expert in addiction recovery. Her federally-funded research in the past 15 years has focused on understanding what helps people with drugs and/or alcohol problems quit and how they stay in recovery. Most recently, she served as Director of the Center for the Study of Addictions and Recovery at the National Development and Research Institutes, Inc. (NDRI); she also provides consultancy to domestic and foreign government and community-based agencies on promoting opportunities for addiction recovery. To develop the Center, she will focus on “building collaborations with institutions and individual scientists who are interested in clarifying recovery processes and partnering to secure research funding.”

IRETA is ideally suited to undertake this initiative. It has taken leadership in promoting recovery issues with events like the National Symposium on Recovery in 2008, and has a rich history of collaboration with national and international leaders in policy, research, treatment and recovery. With the addition of Laudet, the new Center is poised to advance recovery science. “Alexandre will enrich the ‘R’ in IRETA,” says Flaherty. “And with her, we will help transform systems of care and align service models with the concept of addiction as treatable illness with very good recovery.”

IRETA, the Institute for Research, Education, and Training in Addictions, is a non-profit organization that works with national, state, and local partners to improve recognition, prevention, treatment, research and policy related to addiction and recovery. Part of IRETA’s mission is to disseminate information about drug and alcohol prevention and treatment to the public and work to build policies that can make addiction treatment more accessible to the community. For more information, contact Jessica Williams, IRETA Policy Specialist at 412-258-8565 or jessica@ireta.org or see below.

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For more on IRETA: www.ireta.org or Dr. Flaherty: 412-391-4449

For more on the National Symposium on Recovery, 2008: http://www.ireta.org/ireta_main/recovery-symposium.html

For more on federal and local recovery-oriented systems of care: <http://pfr.samhsa.gov/rosc.html>

For more on the ONDCP’s Drug Control Strategy: <http://www.ondcp.gov/update/update-jan2010.pdf>