
MEMORANDUM

Date: January 7, 1969

To: Alcoholism Information and Referral Center Directors

From: Edward A. Kenealy, Senior Field Representative,
Washington State Department of Health

Subject: Press Release on Alcoholism Month

Enclosed are copies of news releases issued by Governor Daniel J. Evans and Dr. Wallace Lane for Alcoholism Month. These have not been released to your local news media.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Alcoholism Information Month)

"Alcoholism is a treatable illness and the earlier it is detected the better the chances for recovery," said Wallace Lane, M.D., acting director, Department of Health, today, as the department's alcoholism program began a month-long campaign to publicize the early warning symptoms of alcoholism.

Dr. Lane noted that January was proclaimed Alcoholism Information Month by Governor Daniel J. Evans, who stressed the need for preventive measures with young people to reduce the incidence of alcoholism.

"Alcoholism is a progressive illness for one out of 18 people," said Dr. Lane. "The occasional drinker progresses to a social drinker. The social drinker becomes a "hard drinker." Eventually, the hard drinker is recognized to be the alcoholic that he is."

But there is nothing inevitable about taking that first drink and becoming an alcoholic, according to Dr. Lane. Most people learn to use alcohol as an adjunct to living rather than as an escape from reality.

The young man or young woman who uses alcohol as an escape mechanism is an incipient alcoholic. The sooner he or she gets professional help the less chance there is of becoming a full-blown or chronic alcoholic.

"When do you recognize the alcoholism symptoms? When do you know that the drinker needs help?"

"A parent, teacher, counselor, supervisor or friend can recognize the early warning symptoms of alcoholism," said Dr. Lane. "When two or more of these symptoms are evident, it's time to seek professional help."

When the drinker is difficult to get along with when drinking, he needs help.

When he drinks "because he is depressed", or drinks "to calm his nerves", he needs help.

(More)

Alcoholism is treatable

Add One

When he drinks until he is "dead drunk" at times, or can't remember parts of some drinking episodes, he needs help.

When the drinker hides his liquor, lies about his drinking, or neglects to eat when drinking, he needs help.

The drinker needs help when, because of drinking, he neglects his family, his studies or his responsibility to operate a motor vehicle so as not to jeopardize the life and property of others.

Dr. Lane emphasized that the drinker who has two or more symptoms must get professional help or risk the almost certain deterioration of chronic alcoholism.

"Unfortunately, the incipient alcoholic, the person with a drinking problem is the last one to acknowledge that he needs help. 'I can handle my liquor, I can quit when I want to,' are standard responses. But the drinker with a problem is least likely to seek help on his own initiative. A crisis may force him to seek treatment--a driving accident, dismissal from school, loss of job, loss of spouse--some traumatic experience may force him to recognize that he has lost control of his drinking.

"In sober, rational moments the incipient alcoholic, if properly approached, may seek treatment at the urging of a relative, counselor, employer or a friend."

"It is to turn the young person from the progressive enervation of alcoholism, while treatment is relatively short and simple, that we urge parent, educators and supervisors to become familiar with early warning symptoms and with ways to get the incipient alcoholic to accept treatment," said Dr. Lane.

Dr. Lane added that the state is now covered by 19 alcoholism information and referral centers or by citizens councils on alcoholism, where people seeking information or professional help can find it.

(End)

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