

DECLARATION OF DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION COOPERATION

8TH U.S. – Mexico Binational Drug Demand Reduction Policy Meeting
February 23-25, 2010
Washington, DC

February 25, 2010

Today we concluded the 8TH U.S. – Mexico Binational Drug Demand Reduction Policy Conference. In both the United States and Mexico, we are unequivocally committed to reduce illicit drug consumption and ameliorate its consequences upon public health and the social, political, cultural and economic well being of our citizens. Illicit drugs affect all population groups, destroying families and our most precious resource, our young people, who are especially at risk and are thus the special focus of our efforts.

In stating our commitment, we underscore the concept of co-responsibility, and acknowledge the duty to take action internally, bilaterally, and regionally. Drug consumption and production is an international problem that must be addressed broadly, and we must particularly focus on the challenges we face within the hemisphere. Consumption of illicit drugs erodes societies, endangers families, and provides illicit earnings that fuel corruption, crime, and violence. Illicit drugs and the drug culture lure children away from school, and adults away from legitimate work.

The United States will soon release President Obama's National Drug Control Strategy, emphasizing five areas for domestic action: 1) a national prevention system comprised of "Prevention Prepared Communities;" 2) training for mainstream healthcare professionals to screen for and intervene against emerging substance use disorders; 3) expanded addiction treatment, incorporating it into mainstream healthcare; 4) protocols for safe, effective management of drug-related offenders in community settings; and 5) design of an early-warning system for new drugs and an ongoing effectiveness report on the effects of drug policies.

For its part, Mexico, through its Action Program for Prevention and Treatment of Addictions, is implementing its own national policy. Mexico is strengthening infrastructure to offer treatment of problems related to the use of psychoactive substances for individuals and their families; as well as emphasizing prevention thorough broad participation of public, social and private entities.

As partners implementing the Merida Initiative, Mexico and the United States are cooperatively promoting clinical trials and community coalition formation. They are developing the National Network for Data Transfer for Addressing Addictions (RENADIC), which will bring web-based interconnectivity to more than 300 New Life Centers for primary attention. In December 2009, Mexico initiated a training project for 600 drug treatment providers in order to accredit them as counselors. Acting in each of our countries and in coordination when possible, Mexico and the United States will emphasize six areas for improvement in the next twelve months:

1. Develop strong, resilient communities on both sides of the border that resist criminal organizations and develop a culture of lawfulness. We support a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals affected by drugs, violence, and other criminal activity. We shall focus on programs for youth, since they are the most vulnerable. Programs may be broadly conceived to strengthen families and advance community development so as to improve the environment in which drug abusers and at-risk persons live. Such an approach includes creating coalitions of community businesses, local schools, and citizens against illicit drugs, as well as strengthening cooperation with trusted law enforcement partners and the federal governments. The effort shall also include support for programs of social communication designed to change public attitudes toward drug-use and the drug culture, and to educate about the dangers of illicit drug use. To advance the development of strong and resilient communities, we will support programs in critical cities in both nations. We are committed to continued information sharing among domestic community coalitions, and we encourage communities interested in developing cross-border coalitions where circumstances permit.
2. Provide more and better addiction treatment by improving training and integrating addiction treatment into mainstream medicine. To expand access to treatment we will advance the integration of substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment training into medical education and healthcare systems. As a matter of policy, we advocate development of a standardized database to be provided for health practitioners and students in training. We support training for medical and health professionals to enable them to recognize substance use disorders. Such training can be appropriately delivered through continuing medical education, so we urge development of college curricula on substance use disorders in both countries. Further, we will promote training for other health practitioners, such as social workers and nurses. We support collaborative prevention and treatment research that will lead to effective programs that can be easily accessed by the general population through community programs and regular health providers in both nations.
3. Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. We seek the expansion of techniques of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for substance use disorder in all health care settings as an effective means of preventing our youth and adults from transitioning to dependence.
4. Implement Evidence Based Prevention Techniques. Prevention efforts are effective in schools, the workplace, and other environments when they are practiced consistent with the research elements that demonstrate their efficacy. We support widespread training in the implementation of prevention techniques that have been demonstrated to have positive results.

5. Accreditation / Licensing. We seek to improve the quality of care available by ensuring health care professionals and treatment providers are professionally competent before they are allowed to provide treatment services to the public. We shall continue to share best practices and explore training opportunities.
6. Innovations in criminal justice to reduce recidivism and interrupt the cycle of drug use and crime. Within a framework of the rule of law and judicial innovations, we intend to advance effective social reintegration practices, including development of substance abuse treatment options, job placement, psychological counseling, recovery support services, and other options as alternatives to incarceration, or as improvements upon treatment available through our criminal justice systems.

President Obama and President Calderon have instructed the governments of the United States and Mexico to rapidly execute the priority programs identified above. As we advance in these areas, we will continue to share scientific information, best practices, and results we observe from implementation. We expect continued close collaboration to be the norm, and we will followup and evaluate operational results.