

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SEARHC, Yale to present naltrexone study findings

JUNEAU, April 18, 2008 — The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) will host three community presentations in May with Dr. Robert Robin, PhD, to present findings from a recent study where the Yale University School of Medicine and SEARHC partnered to test the effectiveness of two medications to treat alcohol dependence in Alaskans.

This was the first study of its kind to be conducted in a rural setting, and it examined how well naltrexone worked by itself and in combination with the anti-depressant drug sertraline (Zoloft) to treat alcohol dependence. Naltrexone is an FDA-approved drug to treat alcoholism, and since 1996 it has been researched with other populations groups in the United States, but not in Alaska or with Alaska Natives or American Indians.

Between 2002 and 2006, this unique study enrolled and treated 101 Alaskans who were dependent on alcohol, including both Native and non-Native individuals. Those enrolled in the study received naltrexone, naltrexone and sertraline in combination, or a placebo. They also received medical management and counseling during the four months they participated in the study.

In his three community presentations, Dr. Robin will present the study findings and then lead a discussion about the role of naltrexone in alcohol treatment. He is a research scientist and psychologist who served as the co-principal investigator for Yale during the study, and he is a former resident of Sitka and Juneau. Dr. Robin now serves as the Administrative Director of the Hopi Guidance Center with the Hopi Tribe in Second Mesa, Ariz. The presentation times and locations are:

- **Sitka** — 2:30 p.m., Monday, May 5, SEARHC Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital 4th Floor Conference Room.
- **Haines** — 4 p.m., Friday, May 9, Haines Borough Public Library.
- **Juneau** — 2 p.m., Monday, May 12, Ethel Lund Medical Center Conference Rooms.

These presentations are open to members of the public, medical and behavioral health providers, and those working in the substance abuse and addictions fields. “The study outcomes hold real implications for the future treatment of alcoholism,” Dr. Robin said.

The study findings will be reported in the July 2008 issue of the medical journal, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. The article’s principal author is Dr. Stephanie O’Malley, PhD, of Yale, who served as principal investigator for the study. In addition to Dr. O’Malley, Dr. Robin and researchers from Yale and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the other study authors include Dr. Aryeh Levenson, MD, Dr. Iva GreyWolf, PhD, and Dr. Ted Chance, MD, of SEARHC, and Dr. Verner Stillner, MD, of Bartlett Regional Hospital.

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