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SCOTLAND FUTURES FORUM TO LOOK AT GROUND-BREAKING TECHNIQUES TO BREAK ADDICTION

4 December 2007

Health professionals and carers will get the chance to learn about the latest techniques used in the United States to break alcohol and drug addictions at an event at the Scottish Parliament on Thursday (6 December).

As part of the Scotland Futures Forum project entitled, 'Fresh Perspectives on Alcohol and Drugs', two US addiction experts will talk about their research and how it could be used in Scotland.

Professor Linda Carter Sobell is Associate Director of Clinical Training at the Centre for Psychological Studies at Nova Southeastern University in Florida and is known internationally for her work on the treatment of addiction.

Her approach focuses on interviewing people with addictions in a way that motivates them to change risk-taking behavioural patterns. This approach was developed to deal with substance abusers resistant to change but has now been successfully applied to treating other health behaviours.

Dr Tom Horvath is the President of SMART (Self Management And Recovery Training) Recovery, an international addiction support group based in San Diego, California. Their approach focuses on empowering people with addictions to bring about change within themselves and aims to treat people with all types of addictive behaviours ranging from alcoholism and drug abuse to gambling addiction. Their approach is seen as an alternative to the traditional view of addiction, which sees it as a lifelong disease resulting from biological and environmental causes.

Scotland's Futures Forum Director Robert Rae said:

"Self change and self empowerment techniques are viewed by many as a powerful method of changing addiction behaviour and I am sure this research will make a valuable contribution to the Forum's Alcohol and Drugs project."

Biographical information – Dr Linda Carter Sobell

Before joining Nova Southeastern University, Dr Sobell was a senior scientist at the Addiction Research Foundation

(Canada) and a Professor at the University of Toronto. She received her Ph.D in psychology from the University of California at Irvine. She has published seven books and over 250 articles and book chapters.

Biographical information – Dr Tom Horvath

Tom Horvath PH.D is a licensed clinical psychologist in California. He founded and is president of Pysys Psychology Group, a corporation respected for its pioneering work in the treatment of addiction. He is author of 'Sex, Drugs, Gambling and Chocolate: A Workbook for Overcoming Addictions'.

Background information on the 'Fresh Perspectives on Alcohol and Drugs' project

Holyrood's think-tank, Scotland's Futures Forum, is carrying out an innovative study into alcohol and drugs use in Scotland. The aim of the project is to look at the following question: "How can Scotland reduce the damage to its population through alcohol and drugs by half by the year 2025?"

The Forum seeks to stimulate open and honest debate on the causes and impacts of drug and alcohol misuse across Scottish society. The study will consider the views of local communities, a wide range of harm reduction measures, the role of poverty, and review international best practice.

The project aims to inform public policy debate and challenge policy makers to consider new long-term approaches to problematic alcohol and drug use. The project is due to be completed in June 2008.

Background information on Scotland's Futures Forum

Scotland's Futures Forum was created by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body in August 2005. The forum aims to identify key challenges facing the nation and stimulate debate between MSPs, academics, civic society, wealth creators and international organisations on the ways of meeting them.

For more information about Scotland's Futures Forum see:

www.scotlandfutureforum.org

www.scottish.parliament.uk/nmCentre/news/futuresforum_news.htm

Media access

Members of the media are welcome to attend this event, which is taking place in Committee Room 1 of the Scottish Parliament and should contact Kallon Basham on 0131 348 6088 or kallon.basham@scottish.parliament.uk. Dr Horvath will present an interactive workshop for those attending at 1pm. Dr Sobell will present a workshop at 3pm and then at 6pm she will deliver a lecture entitled, 'Self change: A Common Pathway from Alcohol and Drug Problems.'

Photography

Photographs will be available afterwards by contacting Andrew Cowan at the Scottish Parliament's Media Relations Office on 0131 348 6269 or andrew.cowan@scottish.parliament.uk.

For further information, the Scottish Parliament media contact is:

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