

## **Alcohol Prevention Leaders Receive APHA Awards**

*San Francisco, Calif. November 18, 2003* – Three individuals who have been instrumental in the successes of two national programs, A Matter of Degree and Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions, were honored by the American Public Health Association (APHA) with leadership awards at the Association's 131<sup>st</sup> annual meeting.

The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) Section of APHA presented its College-Based Leadership Award to **Linda Major**, director of Student Involvement and of NU Directions (A Matter of Degree program) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and to **John Smeaton**, vice provost for student affairs and director of the A Matter of Degree program at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The College-Based Leadership Award acknowledges leadership and innovation in campus ATOD programs that impact students, faculty and administration and recognizes outstanding effort in a college-based campaign to reduce, alcohol, tobacco or other drug use among college-age students.

The ATOD Section also presented its new John D. Slade, MD Memorial Advocacy Award to **Sila María Calderón**, governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The John D. Slade Award recognizes the work of an individual who has demonstrated leadership, resourcefulness and passion in organizing and completing a policy-related campaign in the ATOD field. The award is named after one of the pioneers in the ATOD field who passed away almost two years ago.

Major was cited by the ATOD Section as a “model of how to meld research, scientific knowledge and advocacy practice to form an extremely sophisticated effort to reduce alcohol problems at her campus, in the surrounding city and now, statewide.” The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has reported significant drops in student high-risk drinking and the harms associated with it, including a decline in the “binge drinking” rate from 62 percent in 1997 to 47 percent in 2003.

Smeaton was cited for turning “Lehigh into a model of university commitment to handling alcohol (and other substance abuse) problems in a collaborative, planned, persistent fashion and has been a role model for optimism, clear thinking and leadership in persistently addressing this issue.” In just six years, Lehigh University has seen a 37 percent decline in underage students ability to get alcohol without showing an ID at off-campus bars and clubs, as well as a 23 percent decline in the number of underage students who made alcohol purchases without being carded.

Governor Calderón, a long-time advocate for alcohol control policies, works closely with the Puerto Rico Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking. When she was previously mayor of San Juan, she helped establish the Code of Public Order, enacted to relieve the

harmful environmental conditions that gave rise to alcohol-related problems within the community. The Code ordered all alcohol merchants – especially nightclub establishments – to verify patron IDs and prohibited sales of alcoholic beverages outside of drinking establishments, drinking in public places and consumption of alcohol by automobile drivers and passengers. As governor, she signed a bill in May of 2002 increasing the excise tax on alcohol.

The ATOD Section cited Governor Calderón for demonstrating “strong executive leadership through her commitment to improve the quality of life in Puerto Rican communities...[She] consistently points to proven evidence-based strategies to enrich the lives of Puerto Ricans.”

A Matter of Degree (AMOD): The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students and Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions (RUDC) are supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and managed by the American Medical Association’s Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse.

The 10 AMOD and 12 RUDC sites across the country identify factors in the environment that contribute most to underage drinking in their communities and work to create positive change. These factors include illegal alcohol sales to minors, alcohol distribution and pricing practices, cultural norms and marketing promotions and advertising. The sites use public health strategies to create solutions through environmental change including: curbing alcohol discounting practices, such as two-for-one drink specials; enforcement; supporting increased alcohol excise taxes to reduce consumption by minors who are price sensitive; and supporting laws, which hold providers of alcohol to minors liable for any problems that occur.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse - tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

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