



Brain Research Foundation Launches Advisory Committee to Target Staggering Opioid Relapse Rate

CHICAGO, IL – (February 22, 2018) -- Opioid addiction contributed to more than 60,000 U.S. deaths in 2017, and those who sought treatment for their addiction relapsed at a staggering rate—90 percent, according to some studies. Brain Research Foundation (BRF) today announced that it has formed an Opioid Advisory Committee (OAC) composed of leading scientific experts and the committee has recommended that the initiative first focus on relapse therapeutics.

Fully understanding the mechanisms of opioid addiction will take some time. Therefore, BRF has targeted the issue of relapse reduction for a more immediate impact. This Committee is tasked with identifying research projects to slow the frighteningly high rate of relapse and to bring hope to individuals and loved ones who are facing one of the most dangerous health crises that the U.S. has ever faced. The funding for this crucial research will be provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

“BRF is committed to investigating the unique angle of relapse to improve the health and safety of all Americans and we are appreciative of the support BCBSA, an organization at the forefront of the national dialogue, has committed to our effort,” stated Dr. Terre A. Constantine, Executive Director and CEO of BRF. “This Committee brings together distinguished experts and researchers who have already identified an area of opportunity we believe may positively impact efforts to hinder opioid addiction.”

“BRF’s OAC believes that an opportunity exists today that will help people stay on the path to recovery from opioid addiction and lessen the amount of deaths from overdose. The scope of this crisis is such that even a modest, positive effect on relapse would be of monumental benefit,” Dr. Constantine added.

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Members of Brain Research Foundation's OAC were chosen for their experience and expertise in the area of opioid addiction.

The OAC that will review and recommend which research projects to fund are:

Saira A. Jan, M.S., Pharm D.

Director of Pharmacy Strategy and Clinical Integration
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey
Clinical Professor, Rutgers State University of New Jersey

Jack Bergman, Ph.D.

McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School
Associate Professor of Psychobiology in the Department of Psychiatry

Terre A. Constantine, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer
Brain Research Foundation

Jonathan L. Katz, Ph.D.

Senior Investigator
Chief, Psychobiology Section (Ret.)
National Institute on Drug Abuse

Frank Vocci, Ph.D.

President
Friends Research Institute, Inc.

About Brain Research Foundation

[Brain Research Foundation](#) supports neuroscience research that leads to advanced understanding of brain function in children and adults. This Foundation is committed to advance discoveries that will lead to novel treatments and prevention of all neurological diseases.

We deliver this commitment through both research grant programs, which provide initial funding for innovative research projects, as well as educational programs for researchers and the general public.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national [BCBS Health Indexsm](#). For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit [BCBS.com](#). We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and check out our [blog](#). BCBSA president and CEO Scott Serota is a member of Brain Research Foundation Board of Directors.

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