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A New PATH to Speak at the 2005 International Drug Policy Reform Conference in Long Beach, CA, November 9-12, hosted by the Drug Policy Alliance and dozens of organizations.

Elected Officials, Treatment Providers, Formerly Incarcerated Americans and Religious Leaders, Families of Individuals with Addictive Illness Gather to Promote Alternatives to the Failed War on Drugs.

Issues to be tackled include: methamphetamine, steroids, racism and the drug war, the future of medical marijuana, drug prohibition violence.

(Long Beach, CA) Why are police officers a growing voice calling for the end of the failed war on drugs? How did California change its drug policies to save lives and \$275 million in one year? Can hurricane relief and rebuilding efforts be funded by cutting ineffective and wasteful drug war programs? Why are black men imprisoned for drug offenses at 13 times the rate of white men despite equal rates of drug use across races? Where do performance-enhancing drugs, like anabolic steroids, fall into the overall war of drugs? Is methamphetamine really the new crack?

People will gather to answer these questions and many more at **“Building a Movement for Reason, Compassion and Justice: The Drug Policy Alliance 2005 International Biennial Conference.”** The conference is organized by the Drug Policy Alliance, and dozens of other organizations (see partial list of groups below). The Drug Policy Alliance is the nation’s leading organization working to end the war on drugs and promote new drug policies based on science, compassion, health and human rights.

In the past decade, voters and legislators have enacted more than 150 drug policy reforms on issues ranging from medical marijuana to racial profiling. Building on momentum from these victories, almost 1,000 drug policy experts, health care and drug treatment professionals, elected officials and family and friends of drug war prisoners from around the country and across the world will gather in Long Beach, CA, November 9-12, to promote alternatives to the failed “War on Drugs.”

Gretchen Burns Bergman, Co-Founder and Executive Director of A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing) and PATH Board member Luisa Costa to speak on a panel entitled “Courageous Parents Speak Out”. A New PATH is a non-profit organization of parents, concerned citizens and community leaders working together to reduce the stigma of drug addiction, to increase access to treatment, and to advocate for “therapeutic justice” for substance abuse related crimes.

There will be numerous topics addressed at the conference, including:

- **Law Enforcement Against Prohibition** – These unlikely allies – including a judge, former police officers, and others – have all come to the same conclusion: drug prohibition is a failure. Participants will address how the war on drugs has negatively impacted their profession and how they came to oppose it. They will give their impressions of the human and monetary costs involved in continuing the war and describe their efforts to confront the misguided stalwarts who stand in the way of pragmatic reform.

•**Building a Movement with Integrity and Strength:** Formerly incarcerated People Take the Lead – The United States is the world’s largest jailer. There are more people in prison in the U.S. on drug charges than are incarcerated in the entire European Union for all offenses and the E.U. has 100 million more residents than the U.S. How does the war on drugs feed the prison industrial complex? Why is the leadership of formerly incarcerated people central to the success of movements for comprehensive drug policy and criminal justice reform?

•**Methamphetamine** – Some people say “harm reduction and methamphetamine” is an oxymoron. Others have found effective strategies to help reduce the harm of this powerful stimulant. Panelists will discuss the latest research on this controversial topic.

•**Steroids** - This session will tackle the ethical issues behind steroid use in sports. Is the recent government crackdown and resulting media frenzy justified? What are the myths and what are the facts about steroids? Is there a place for steroids in our society? Panelists will discuss these and other questions.

•**Chronic Pain** – Increased state and federal investigation of pain management physicians have major implications for patients and medical professionals. How can patients and doctors work together to make sure everyone is getting the medicine they need?

•**Drug courts vs. California’s Proposition 36** – Some say participants in California’s landmark alternative-to-incarceration program, Prop. 36, should face punitive jail sanctions for even minor infractions. Others say such measures hurt – not help – program participants. Hear both sides’ logic in this spirited debate. The Drug Policy Alliance is partnered with dozens of organizations to host this biennial International Conference, including: ACLU Drug Law Reform Project, American Liver Foundation, A New PATH, Angelica Foundation, Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team, Argentinean Harm Reduction Association, Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, Canadian Harm Reduction Coalition, Coalition of Latino AIDS Service Providers - San Diego, Common Sense for Drug Policy, Criminal Justice Policy Foundation, Critical Resistance, DonorDigital.com, Drug Reform Coordination Network, Educators for Sensible Drug Policy, F.A.C.T.S. – Los Angeles, High Times, Interfaith Drug Policy Initiative, International Harm Reduction Association, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, Marijuana Policy Project, Narco News, National Alliance of Methadone Advocates, the National Black Police Association, New York Community Trust – Samaritaphia Fund, the North America Syringe Exchange Network, The November Coalition, Progressive Christians Uniting, Rainforest Action Network, REFORMA, Reason Magazine, Safe Access Now, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Unitarian Universalists for Drug Policy Reform, Willie C. Velasquez Institute, as well as many other organizations from around the country and the world.

“My family has experienced both the devastation of the disease of addiction and the harmful effects of punitive incarceration for non-violent drug offenders. I am committed to striving for better understanding of and treatment for addictive illness.” –Gretchen Burns Bergman

Visit <http://www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/> today to register for the conference, see a full list of endorsing organizations and view the most up to date schedule.

For info on A New PATH: www.anewpath.cc.