

NYU Today

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After the news conference announcement about the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's \$26.4 million "Fighting Back" program, from left: President Brademas, Leighton E. Cluff, Ruby P. Hearn, Chancellor Oliva, W. Anderson Spickard, Jr.

Brademas Leads Review Committee For Grants to Fight Drug Abuse

NEW YORK University President John Brademas will chair a group of 11 national experts reviewing community grant proposals for a total \$26.4 million given by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to reduce demand for illegal drugs and alcohol.

The \$26.4 million for a new nationwide "Fighting Back" program is the largest single commitment of private funds to the problem of substance abuse, according to officials of the Foundation, the nation's largest health care philanthropy.

Founded by the chairman of Johnson & Johnson, the foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., awards grants totalling \$100 million a year for model health services programs, health care and health policy research, and training for health professionals.

University Chancellor L. Jay Oliva, who served recently on President Reagan's White House Conference for a Drug-Free America, will be vice chair of the committee to help select "Fighting Back" community proposals for recommendation to the foundation's board of trustees. As many as 12 communities can receive one-year or two-year planning grants of \$100,000 a year, and eight communities will be selected to carry out their strategies for education, prevention, treatment and aftercare, using subsequent grants of \$3 million each over five years. The first winners will be named next week.

said at a news conference Feb. 6 in Bobst Library to announce the new initiatives.

"One of the measures I sponsored in Congress in which I continue to take great pride was the Drug Abuse Education Act of 1970 which, for the first time, provided federal funds for special drug abuse education programs in elementary and secondary schools and in adult and community education programs. Four years later, in 1974, Congress broadened the program to include alcohol abuse education.

"We who lead the nation's colleges and universities feel a special obligation to the students who attend them," Brademas added. "Moreover, for universities like NYU, located in the heart of a major urban center, we feel an added responsibility to lend our resources to help meet the problems that affect the communities in which we are located."

The national "Fighting Back" effort is aimed at medium-sized communities with populations of 100,000 to 200,000, said Leighton E. Cluff, M.D., foundation president. Multi-county regions or parts of larger cities are eligible to compete for the funds.

"To date, most communities have focused on limiting the supply of illegal drugs and alcohol—a crucially important endeavor," he said at the news conference. "But efforts to reduce the demand for these substances have been fragmented and short-lived. The result has been an overwhelming sense of frustration—a sense that nothing can be done to solve the prob-

lem, using prevention, education and treatment to complement the important law enforcement efforts already under way."

W. Anderson Spickard, M.D., professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., will direct the new program. Communities must create a citizens' task force to compete for the funds, he said. "The task forces will ensure that the initiatives truly belong to those communities, as well as provide the broad-based support needed to sustain those efforts," he explained.

"Coordination of efforts takes money," said Ruby P. Hearn, Ph.D., vice president of the foundation. "We see our money as glue to help communities take advantage of state and federal money and improve the availability of treatment and aftercare."

"Most people think of this problem as a national one, but we think that the solutions can be found at the local level, particularly in the area of reducing the demand for illegal drugs and alcohol," declared Brademas.

According to the foundation, one in eight Americans past the age of 11 used an illegal drug at least once in the last month; some 18 million Americans, or one out of every 10 adults, have symptoms of alcohol dependency or significant problems associated with alcohol; about half of all U.S. motor vehicle fatalities are alcohol-related, and society's annual costs for drug and alcohol abuse are expected to reach \$229 billion in 1990—including \$136 billion for alcohol abuse,