

July
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FORCE

Female Opioid-addiction Research and Clinical Experts



MISSION STATEMENT

FORCE is an alliance of women experts in health policy, clinical medicine and scientific endeavors, with a mission to reduce stigma and treatment barriers and provide access to evidence-based treatment

We want to move from “addicts” to “patients”, from “arrest addicts” to “arrest the disease”, from a “moral failing” to a “spiritual awakening”, from “reducing deaths” to “restoring life”, from “resurrect from death” to “intervene for treatment”, from “abstinence” to “recovery”, and from “detox from drugs” to the “development of healthy rituals”.

*– Dr. Andrea Barthwell
Chairwoman of FORCE*

18 Prominent and Credentialed Women Turn Collective Leadership Skills Towards an Attack on Opioid Addiction

Eighteen prominent women unveiled a new not for profit organization called FORCE, Female Opioid-addiction Research and Clinical Experts, at the National Press Club today, June 23rd, 2016. The women led by Chairwoman, Dr. Andrea Barthwell and business executive, Behshad Sheldon, have banded together to plug a leak in the dike of opioid addiction. These women will share their knowledge, leadership skills, and passion to move forward and take aggressive actions to stem the growing tide of opioid addiction.

As FORCE began to unveil their vision and future objectives, it became clear that they could become a serious player on this crowded but slow moving landscape of misuse and abuse, stigmatization, addiction and deaths due to opioid dependency. They seem to a person to want to be part of a team that reduces this dread epidemic with a move to destigmatize those who have this brain disease. It's a little too early to say how successful they will be, but if intent and commitment are any indication, they are going to be a force to change the addiction world.

“Our responsibility as physicians is to bring evidence-based care to patients who are in need, to help educate families on what that care should look like, to help educate policy makers on what policies should be put into place to support appropriate care, treatment and prevention.”

– Dr. Kelly Clark



*Dr. Kelly Clark and Dr. Annie Umbricht,
FORCE founding members.*

Founding FORCE Members

- **Genie L Bailey**, MD, DABAM, FASAM, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Director of Research, Stanley Street Treatment & Resources, Inc.
- **Andrea Barthwell**, MD, DFASAM Past President of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and former Deputy Director of Demand Reduction White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)
- **Reed Brady**, MS, JD, Head of Quality and Compliance, Braeburn Pharmaceuticals
- **Kelly Clark**, MD, MBA, DFASAM, DFAPA: Chief Medical Officer of CleanSlate Centers
- **Sandra Comer**, PhD, Director of the Opioid Laboratory in the Division on Substance Abuse, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University, President of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence
- **Shannon Hartley**, Chief Marketing Officer at Shatterproof, a national nonprofit organization focused on ending addiction
- **Amy L. Kennedy**, Director of Education, The Kennedy Forum
- **Sonnie Kim**, PharmD, SVP Clinical Development and Medical Affairs, Braeburn Pharmaceuticals
- **Shruti Kulkarni**, Policy Director for Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence (CLAAD)
- **Michelle Lofwall**, MD, University of Kentucky, Associate Professor, Departments of Behavioral Science & Psychiatry, Center on Drug and Alcohol Research
- **Kenzie L. Preston**, Ph.D., Senior Investigator, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Chief, Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics Research
- **Behshad Sheldon**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Braeburn Pharmaceuticals
- **Kathleen Todd**, xxx
- **Annie Umbricht**, MD, Johns Hopkins University, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- **Sharon Walsh**, PhD, Director of the Center on Drug and Alcohol Research, Professor of Behavioral Science, Psychiatry, Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Kentucky and past President of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence
- **Amanda Wilson**, MD, Founder and Chairwoman of CleanSlate clinics, treating over 5000 patients with opioid addiction in the outpatient setting
- **Stacey L. Worthy**, Esq., Director of Public Policy for the Alliance for the Adoption of Innovations in Medicine (Aimed Alliance)



Dr. Nora Volkow was presented with the 2016 FORCE Award in recognition of the positive impacts she is making in our Nation's fight against the disease of opioid addiction.

Most organizations have a powerful leader or two. This organization has 18 highly experienced, extremely capable and interested leaders. (See list of FORCE alliance members and their credentials on p.2)

“That is why NIDA has focused so much on the development of acceleration and facilitation of development of medications for the treatment of substance use disorders because it provides solutions that can help those that are fighting an extremely difficult, this is very very serious, with high mortality rate to succeed.”

– Dr. Nora Volkow

Additionally they are all women and they understand that opioid addiction is a disease that not only affects women directly, but indirectly as well. They recognize that women often carry the burden of treating and caring for a child or loved one

afflicted with this disease.

Dr. Andrea Barthwell is not only prominent in the field and an MD, she knows her way around political structures and is not shy about her ability to persuade others to get involved in making a contribution towards this cause. The contribution may be expertise, it may be time and energy or it may be a monetary contribution. “I like to raise money, said Dr. Barthwell. I have the stomach for it because of the importance of this particular endeavor. And today, in my opinion, there is no better cause than to attack the de-stigmatization that surrounds this epidemic which prevents people from getting the treatment they need for this dread disease. That’s why we say, “It’s Chemistry, Not Character.”

Looking Toward the Future

One can only wonder what this group of women will achieve and what tactics they will use to achieve it. Will they be able to finally mobilize the press to ask and write about the solutions, not just chronicle that there is a problem? The press needs to now focus on solutions in the areas of policy, research/development and innovation, and in clinical delivery.

Will they be able to influence government policy in a way that decriminalizes and destigmatizes opioid addiction?

Will they be able to mobilize a passionate campaign that will educate women and men across the United States and indeed around the globe in order to ensure that there is an understanding that this particular addiction can happen to anyone? It is not the result of bad moral behavior most of the time. “Usually it is people that exist in your own family; your brother, your sister, your son, your daughter, your father, your mother...who go in for some kind of surgery and are genetically pre-disposed towards opioid addiction,” said Behshad Sheldon. “They are victims, not criminals and they often catch the disease as a result of having surgery or some other very legal, very appropriate activity,” Ms. Sheldon said.



Deputy Chief of Staff Gabriel Auteri of the City of Baltimore Health Department accepts the 2016 FORCE award on behalf of Dr. Leana Wen who was also honored for her efforts in fighting the opioid addiction epidemic.

Unlike other diseases like diabetes, AIDS and high blood pressure, the medication assisted treatment is not widely known even by physicians who are most likely to have the first conversation with opioid addicted patients. ■

“Clearly, when you mobilize a FORCE with these types of leadership skills, commitment and genuine interest is essential in fighting a disease that already has harmed millions and killed tens of thousands. We intend to influence government policy so that it focuses on practical solutions, educates the public and informs the clinicians who are responsible to treat the disease.”

– Reed Brady, FORCE Secretary

In Summary

FORCE will impact policy, research and innovation and the clinical treatment of patients.

“Those suffering from this disease should feel very comfortable because of the formation of FORCE. They now have a formidable ally; a team of superb professionals whose motives cannot be questioned and whose determination will make a major difference in the number of people who are diagnosed, treated properly and able

to be safe, alive and functional,” said Dr. Annie Umbricht.

The women of FORCE also believe that the destigmatization of the disease of opioid addiction should leave people feeling as comfortable in talking about this disease as they do in discussing high blood pressure or diabetes.

One day it may be said that today June 23rd, 2016 was the day when 18 women launched their effort to make opioid addiction history.



Front row from left to right: Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Dr. Kelly Clark, Gabriel Auteri, Dr. Nora Volkow, Behshad Sheldon, Dr. Annie Umbricht; Second row from left to right: Stacey Worthy, Reed Brady, Amy Kennedy, Sonnie Kim, Shruti Kulkarni (see p.2 for titles and credentials)