

If there is a kinetic moment in the rise of community-based alcoholism/addiction treatment programs in the United States, it could well be the founding of the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA) by Mrs. Marty Mann in 1944. NCEA marked the formal initiation of a movement to radically redefine public attitudes toward alcoholism. That apex of that movement's influence was passage of federal legislation in 1970 that channeled money from the federal government to states and local communities for the planning, construction, operation, and evaluation of local alcoholism treatment programs. The article below is Mann's public announcement of the founding of NCEA. Mrs. Marty Mann through her efforts at NCEA is among the leading public health pioneers within the history of the United States. The article below was her declaration of war on the social stigma attached to alcoholism.

William White, Author, *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment & Recovery in America*

Mann, M. (1944). Formation of a National Committee for Education on Alcoholism. *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 5(3), 354-358.

Formation of a National Committee for Education on Alcoholism

The National Committee for Education on Alcoholism, Inc., sponsored by the Yale Plan for Alcohol Studies, will open its offices on October 1, 1944, at 2 East 103d Street (Room 447, New York Academy of Medicine Building), New York City. The Committee has been organized as a nonprofit membership corporation under Connecticut charter. Its membership is made up of persons from all fields of activity who are concerned with the problem of alcoholism and interested in a program of activity toward its solution.

What the National Committee Is

The National Committee for Education on Alcoholism is an organization created to help educate the general public on the subject of alcoholism. The National Committee is interested solely in the most acute problem associated with alcohol: the disease of alcoholism (compulsive drinking) and the person suffering from it—the alcoholic; it does not extend its activities to the larger and controversial subject of alcohol itself. The National Committee for Education on Alcoholism believes that alcoholism is a public health problem that can be solved, should be solved now, and is a public responsibility to solve now. To further this aim by educational means is the duty assumed by the National Committee.

Why the National Committee was Formed

That alcoholism is a disease, rather than a moral shortcoming, has been known to scientists for a considerable time; but unfortunately this knowledge has never become public property—it has remained an unguarded secret. Practically nothing is

known by the general public about the true nature of alcoholism the disease or alcoholism the public health problem. The alcoholic is still commonly regarded at best as a willful nuisance, at worst as a vicious criminal. This attitude does not lend itself to constructive action; it is therefore imperative that such misconceptions be corrected if anything is to be done about the problem.

National Committee for Education on Alcoholism

Dr. Lawrence Kolb, Assistant Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service, has stated that alcoholism is our greatest unsolved public health problem. One of the factors contributing to this state of affairs has undoubtedly been the public's almost total lack of knowledge about it. Once known and recognized, this problem, like any other, can be solved. The remarkable success of Alcoholics Anonymous, with at least 12,000 rehabilitated alcoholics in its membership, has shown this. But the general public, and the greatest number of alcoholics themselves, still need to be made acquainted with the true nature of alcoholism, with the possibilities of clinics and information centers, and with the existence of local groups of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the hope of the National Committee that, under the guidance of scientists and with the help of influential laymen and of Alcoholics Anonymous groups, ever greater progress can be made against this ailment, just as through sane, wise, energetic community action led by similar organizations lives have been saved from tuberculosis, cancer and the venereal diseases.

What the National Committee Will Do

Community action, in the form of local committees in cities or states or both, armed with sound scientific knowledge, can make a start at really solving this problem. With the aid of the Yale Plan for Alcohol Studies, the National Committee will be provided always with information and literature that are unbiased and abreast of the newest developments in scientific research. The National Committee will disseminate this knowledge by all possible means, and help form local committees wherever possible.

To these ends the National Committee will send out its executive director to lecture on alcoholism in general and on the proved effective ways of dealing with it. It will provide literature on all aspects of the problem for distribution in interested communities. It will make this service, and other services to be provided by the Committee, available to any organized group anywhere in the country which is truly interested in the problem of alcoholism and wishes to do something about it. If such groups are ready for action the National Committee will help them form local committees, providing them with a program of action designed to start solving their community's problem of alcoholism.

As an integral part of the National Committee, with the specific function of acting as liaison between it and organized women's groups throughout the country, which might well serve as the nucleus for local committees, Mrs. Grace Allen Bangs, director

of the Club Service Bureau of the New York Herald-Tribune, has formed a Women's Organizing Committee under her chairmanship.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board of the National Committee numbers among its members the following representative citizens:

Dwight Anderson, public relations director, New York State Medical Society; Faith Baldwin, author; Dr. Russell S. Boles, president of the Board, Philadelphia General Hospital; Mrs. LaFell Dickinson, president, National Federation of Women's Clubs; Dr. Clements C. Fry, psychiatrist, Yale University; Dr. Howard W. Haggard, director, Laboratory of Applied Physiology, Yale University; Arthur Garfield Hays, lawyer; Arthur Hopkins, theatrical producer; Marcus Heiman, theatrical producer; E. M. Jellinek, director, Section on Alcohol Studies, Yale University, Dr. Lawrence Kolb, Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service; Austin H. MacCormick, director, the Osborne Association; Rev. Francis W. McPeck, executive director, Dept. of Social Welfare, Washington Federation of Churches; Hon. William M. Menninger, psychiatrist, the Menninger Clinic; Harriet R. Mowrer, social psychologist; Fulton Oursler, editor and radio commentator; Dorothy Parker, author; Mary Pickford, actress; Channing Pollock, author; Rev. Otis R. Rice, religious director, St. Luke's Hospital, New York; Dr. Robert Smith, co-founder, Alcoholics Anonymous; Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, medical director, Blythewood Sanitarium; William Wilson, founder, Alcoholics Anonymous; and Dr. Edwin G. Zabriskie, professor of clinical neurology, Columbia University.

The Board of Directors consists of Dwight Anderson, Mrs. Grace Allen Bangs, Selden D. Bacon, Edward G. Baird, Dr. Howard W. Haggard, E. M. Jellinek, Edgar Lockwood, Austin H. MacCormick, and Mrs. Marty Mann.

Members of the Women's Organizing Committee

The membership of the Women's Organizing Committee is made up of the following:

Chairman, Mrs. Grace Allen Bangs; Mrs. Julius Ochs Adler, co-chairman of the New York City Defense Recreation Committee; Mrs. Anne Barnard, director of women's activities, National Safety Council; Mrs. Sidney Borg, chairman, Manhattan Civilian Defense Volunteer Office; Ruth Collins, superintendent, New York City House of Detention for Women; Mrs. Kathleen Devine, assistant to the head of the Welfare Department, New York Life Insurance Company; Mrs. Ethel Hendriksen, of the New York State Department of Health; Judge Anna M. Kross, New York City magistrate; Mrs. Albert D. Lasker, executive secretary, National Committee on Mental Hygiene; Pauline Mandigo, public relations expert and president of the Phoenix News; Mrs. Leopold K. Simon, lawyer, member of the New York State Industrial Labor Board; Mrs. Sara Sparks, president, New York State Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and

personal director of Western Union; and Jane Tiffany Wagner, head of the Women's War Activities Department, National Broadcasting Company.

It is hoped that the National Committee and its Women's Organizing Committee will find supporters among many more men and women: scientists doing or interested in research on this problem; physicians and psychiatrists interested in any phase of alcoholism; clergymen who are interested in solving this problem; members of public and civic organizations who have to cope with the problem of alcoholism now; and persons in private life or business who recognize the extent of this problem in this country.

Specific Aims of the National Committee

The Committee aims to gain acceptance by the general public of these five cardinal points:

1. Alcoholism is a disease.
2. The alcoholic, therefore, is a sick person.
3. The alcoholic can be helped.
4. The alcoholic is worth helping.
5. Alcoholism is our No. 4 public health problem, and our public responsibility.

It aims to circulate sound scientific literature containing all the known facts on the problem of alcoholism and how to deal with it.

It aims to help organize local committees who can publicize these facts and to aid them in setting up in their communities information centers or clinics to deal with the problem. To this end the National Committee will provide a period of training for the person selected by such a local committee to operate their information center, or it will send an expert organizer to help establish a clinic on the model of the Yale Plan Clinics.

It aims to help establish contact between all such local committees and the nearest group of Alcoholics Anonymous, so that they may coordinate their efforts if they wish. These groups, of which there are more than 350 all over the country, are made up of former alcoholics whose main avocation is to help other alcoholics to recover, and their membership should provide helpful to any committee which is earnestly trying to solve this problem.

In short, the total effort of the National Committee will be directed toward bringing the facts of alcoholism before the public and spreading knowledge about it by word of mouth and through the printed page, and fostering the creation of clinics and other facilities for the rehabilitation of tens of thousands of alcoholics.

Marty Mann, *Executive Director*

National Committee for Education on Alcoholism