



**April**

Alcohol Awareness Month

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## ***Treatment Approach Derived from Founder's Successful Recovery from Alcoholism***

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 54 million Americans participated in binge drinking within 30 days prior to taking a National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and 22 million adults abused alcohol or were alcohol dependent.

Over 25% of U.S. children are exposed to alcohol abuse and alcohol-related crashes account for 41% of all fatal car accidents. The face of people who abuse alcohol can also include college students who binge drink at local bars, pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome, professionals who drink after a long day of work, and senior citizens who drink out of loneliness.

"I applaud SAMHSA for bringing alcoholism to our attention. This form of addiction alone accounts for 500 million lost workdays annually," said Stan Stokes, MS, CCDC, LPC, Founder of Bridging The Gaps – a local integrative addictions treatment facility. "Alcohol is not readily recognized as an addictive substance or even a drug of choice. These figures serve as confirmation that there is a national health problem!"

Stokes' battle with alcoholism is a personal, sobering reminder of individuals still ravaged by the disease of addiction. He reflects on a time when he planned each day around his drinking schedule, progressively losing the ability to control his behavior, socially and professionally. After receiving treatment in a traditional 30-day program, Stan continued to experience both physical and emotional symptoms of addiction. This resulted in the all too familiar and destructive pattern – treatment, relapse, back to treatment!

After suffering for five years in this pattern, he began to conduct his own research, looking for the path to sobriety. At this stage in his recovery, Stan noticed a gap that existed between traditional and alternative approaches to addictions treatment. He was convinced that a life free from the ravages of addiction was possible.

Stan discovered studies that showed the link between substance abuse and nutrition, allergies, and brain imbalances. He incorporated this knowledge in his recovery routine, has been clean and sober for 29 years, and heads up a team of addictions professionals offering support and hope to others still battling addiction.

"Battling any kind of addiction is a challenge. But a life free from the ravages of addiction is possible," says Stokes. "Trying to ignore it or pass it off as something you can control often leads to short-lived sobriety. I am encouraging people who are battling with alcoholism or other types of addiction to seek out local recovery support and resources."

If you suspect that you might have a drinking problem or know of someone who abuses alcohol, contact:

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information (NCADI)  
(800) 729-6686

For information on treatment for alcoholism and other addictions, contact:

Bridging The Gaps  
(540) 535-1111