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**NATION'S LEADING PREVENTION RESEARCHERS TO RELEASE NEW FINDINGS
ON AT-RISK YOUTH, DOMESTIC ABUSE, VIOLENCE AND SUICIDE**

Findings to Help Schools, Parents, Policymakers and Doctors Implement Effective Prevention Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 9 — Can prevention help improve the lives of preschoolers who are already at risk? What happens when girls use drugs; do they behave differently than boys? Are after-school programs making a difference in the lives of troubled youth? Are both men and women aggressive in intimate relationships? Can a federally funded database help prevent suicide from firearms?

Research related to prevention of anti-social and destructive behavior among adults and at-risk youth will be presented at the Society for Prevention Research's (SPR) 2003 annual meeting, "Research to Policy," from June 12 – 14 in the nation's capital. More than 500 prevention researchers will attend the meeting at the Hyatt Regency Washington.

SPR President Gilbert J. Botvin, Ph.D., from Cornell University Medical College's Institute for Prevention Research, said the theme of the meeting, "Research to Policy," will examine how prevention research can be implemented by schools; local, state and federal agencies; community organizations; advocacy groups; physicians and counselors. More than 230 researchers will present the latest findings of their work on prevention science.

Several senior federal officials from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Department of Education and the National Institutes of Health will also speak at the meeting.

The Society for Prevention Research is an international organization based in Washington, D.C., focused on advancing prevention programs and policies based on research. Its membership includes scientists, practitioners, advocates, administrators and policy makers who are concerned with the prevention of social, physical and mental health problems and the promotion of health, safety and well-being.

Zili Sloboda, Sc.D., from the University of Akron, is chair of SPR's scientific program for the 2003 annual meeting. She said this year's presentations will be especially helpful to government agencies and community groups who are interested in translating the latest research into effective prevention programs and policies.

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The research papers will also help communities understand their readiness to support prevention programs aimed at specific population groups, such as infants, girls, adolescents and minorities.

Sloboda said the papers related to at-risk preschoolers will look at prevention programs that can help improve their social skills and improve the way in which they are brought up by their parents. Many at-risk preschoolers have had an older sibling who has already been in trouble with the court system. These young children also live in families where the parents are not married, have not completed high school, and are receiving public assistance.

Researchers will also look at after-school programs that have become popular in many states because they help prevent delinquency among kids. Research has shown that juvenile crime peaks between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on school days. After-school programs offer the promise of keeping problem youth off the streets and provide them with a structured environment. Researchers are gaining a better understanding of how after-school programs can make a difference in the lives of problem youth.

“Designing substance abuse prevention programs for girls is also drawing considerable attention from researchers,” Sloboda said. Early surveys of adolescents with substance abuse problems have showed that boys engage in more substance abuse than girls. But, recent data reveal few gender differences in substance use. Researchers are also examining what happens when girls use drugs. Are they more likely to develop drug dependence than boys?

Aggression among couples is another topic of interest to prevention scientists, according to Sloboda. Traditionally, aggression among couples involved women being assaulted by men. However, recent studies have shown that both men and women are aggressive in intimate relationships. Researchers are getting a better understanding of how this affects marital outcomes and how this problem can be prevented, according to Sloboda.

Sloboda, one of the founding members of the Society for Prevention Research, said the organization began in 1991 as a small group of 19 researchers who were interested in prevention science. The Society for Prevention Research has since grown to more than 500 members from the U.S. and other countries. The 2004 annual meeting of the Society for Prevention Research will be held in Quebec, Canada.

Senior federal officials who are scheduled to address the Society for Prevention Research meeting include: Marry Ann Solberg, Deputy Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; Charles Curie, Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Mary Dufour, Deputy Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Richard Nakamura, Deputy Director of the National Institute on Mental Health; and Nora Volkov, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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