

## Black Lawyers Association Leadership Urges Members Use of LAP

Gregg Davis, President of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers, and former North Carolina Chief Justice Henry E. Frye urge any member who may be having problems with alcohol, other drugs, or depression to contact the Lawyer Assistance Program. The Lawyer Assistance Program is a confidential service funded by the State Bar to assist lawyers with problems of addiction and mental health, before these problems impair a lawyer's ability to practice. Former State Bar President Cressie Thigpen states:

I endorse and commend the LAP without qualification. State Bar statistics indicate that approximately 60% of the lawyers suspended or disbarred were involved with alcohol or drugs; or suffered from some form of depression. The statistics involving Black lawyers are just about the same. The LAP has an excellent track record of working with lawyers who have alcohol, drug, and depression problems. I sincerely hope that we will start using the services of the LAP that are available to us.

Although the LAP program is always confidential, because it is funded by the State Bar sometimes a lawyer is reluctant to call the LAP because of its connection to the Bar, even though the LAP is governed by a separate nine person board. Irving Joyner states:

I know that it is extremely difficult for people to accept or admit to anyone that they are having a problem with a substance. The realization is painful, but they need to know that they are not alone and help is just a telephone call away. Brothers and Sister in the profession who are affected by this problem must come to grip with their reality. The Lawyer Assistance Program offers understanding and experienced individuals who can assist in turning the weakness of abuse into strengths.

Addiction and depression are equal opportunity diseases. The sooner one gets help the greater the opportunity for long term recovery. The LAP has an excellent track record of successfully and confidentially assisting over 80% of those lawyers who either seek assistance or respond meaningfully to an offer of assistance. A substantial number of the LAP clients are self-referrals, but the majority are from a lawyer who is concerned about another lawyer. Lawyers who help each other help themselves. All calls are confidential.

### Confidentiality

If you call to seek help for yourself, your inquiry is confidential.

If you call as the spouse, child, or friend of a lawyer whom you suspect may be suffering from an alcohol or drug problem, your communication is also treated confidentially and never related to the lawyer for whom you are seeking help without your permission. Under Rule 1.6 of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct, the attorney-client privilege applies to communications between a lawyer seeking or needing assistance and the Lawyer Assistance Program. The Lawyer Assistance Program is, by rule of the State Bar and approved by the North Carolina Supreme Court, entirely separate from any ethics or disciplinary committee of the State Bar.

### What is Chemical Addiction?

Alcoholism and other chemical addictions are a leading health problem and cause of death in this country. The National Institute on Alcohol and Alcohol Abuse estimates that ten percent of the population of the United States are alcoholics or otherwise chemically addicted. Chemical addiction within the legal profession may be as high as 20%. Chemical addiction is a long term, progressive, and unless treated, fatal brain disease.

### What is Depression?

Depression is an illness that involves the whole person. It includes the person's body, mood, and thinking. It affects eating and sleeping habits, feelings about self and thoughts about everything. Fifteen percent of people who have a serious depression may eventually commit suicide. Don't let this happen to you or to someone you know. Confidential help is available through the Lawyer Assistance FRIENDS Program. To get help, simply call 1-877-627-3743.

For more information please contact:

#### **FRIENDS**

Ed Ward, Director  
Post Office Box 25908  
Raleigh, NC 27611  
eward@ncbar.com  
1-877-627-3743  
919-828-0719

#### **PALS**

Don Carroll, Director  
Post Office Box 1146  
Davidson, NC 28036  
nclap@bellsouth.net  
1-800-720-PALS  
704-892-5699

Visit the Lawyer Assistance Program website at [www.nclap.org](http://www.nclap.org)



Take the Test - Determine if Drinking is a Problem

YES NO

- 1. Do you get to work late or leave early due to drinking?
- 2. Is drinking disturbing your home life?
- 3. Do you drink because you are shy with other people?
- 4. Do you wonder if drinking is affecting your reputation?
- 5. Have you gotten into financial difficulties as a result of drinking?
- 6. Does drinking make you neglect your family or family activities?
- 7. Has your ambition decreased since drinking?
- 8. Do you often drink alone?
- 9. Does drinking determine the people you tend to be with?
- 10. Do you crave a drink at a definite time of day?
- 11. Do you want a drink the next morning?
- 12. Does drinking cause you to have difficulty sleeping?
- 13. Have you had difficulty being honest with your physician about your drinking?
- 14. Do you drink to build up your self-confidence?
- 15. Have you ever been to a hospital or institution because of drinking?
- 16. Do family or friends ever question the amount you drink?

If your answer is yes to two or more of these questions or if you are simply sick and tired of being sick and tired, you should call PALS today.

Take the Test - Determine if Depression is a Problem

YES NO

- 1. Do you or they feel a deep sense of depression, sadness, or hopelessness most of the day?
- 2. Have you or they experienced diminished interest in most or all activities?
- 3. Have you or they experienced significant appetite or weight change when not dieting?
- 4. Have you or they experienced a significant change in sleeping patterns?
- 5. Do you or they feel unusually restless...or unusually sluggish?
- 6. Do you or they feel unduly fatigued?
- 7. Do you or they experience persistent feelings of hopelessness or inappropriate feelings of guilt?
- 8. Have you or they experienced a diminished ability to think or concentrate?
- 9. Do you or they have recurrent thoughts of death or suicide?

If you or someone you care about answers yes to five or more of these questions (including questions #1 or #2)...and if the symptoms described have been present nearly every day for two weeks or more, you should consider calling the Lawyer Assistance Program for help in finding a health care professional to evaluate different treatment options for depression with you.

Other explanations for these symptoms may need to be considered.

Adapted from *American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Fourth Edition. Washington, DC. American Psychiatric Association: 1994.