



**Contact:** Shell Amega | samega@cscmail.org  
Paula Wagner | pwagner@cscmail.org  
Kristina Kurasz | kkurasz@cscmail.org  
(213) 744-7446  
[www.californiasciencecenter.org](http://www.californiasciencecenter.org)

### ***Target America* Opens at the California Science Center**

October 2, 2008 through May 3, 2009  
*Exhibit from the Drug Enforcement Administration*  
*explores the many costs and consequences of illegal drugs*

**Los Angeles**—The Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) traveling exhibit *Target America: Opening Eyes to the Damage Drugs Cause* will open in Los Angeles at the California Science Center on October 2, 2008. Running through May 3, 2009 the exhibit will explore the science behind drug addiction and the myriad costs of illegal drugs to individuals, American society and the world.

*Target America* began its national tour in 2002 and comes to Los Angeles with a newly expanded section specific to Southern California. The “Southern California Story” section looks at prevention, treatment and law enforcement issues related to drugs in Southern California as well as current neuroscience research aimed at understanding and breaking the cycle of drug abuse and addiction. Most Americans are unaware of the science behind the damaging effects of illegal drugs on the mind and body, or of the other tremendous costs associated with the production, sale and use of illegal drugs. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans are not drug users, the costs to society – estimated at more than \$180 billion a year – are paid by the public in many ways. This includes the cost of lost productivity of users in the workplace, their health care, criminal justice costs, child welfare costs, and the impact their drug use has on everyone’s health and safety.

"This exhibit will open eyes to the vast and tragic consequences of illegal drugs-- from their damaging health effects, to lost lives, to taxing our healthcare and social welfare systems, to billions in economic losses, to family despair, environmental harm, impaired worker performance, to funding terrorism," said DEA Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart. "Understanding the far-reaching and devastating impact of illegal drugs is key to preventing drug abuse."

Jeffrey Rudolph, President and CEO of the California Science Center noted that, "We are pleased to bring *Target America* to Los Angeles and are especially proud that the exhibit’s newly expanded section on the neuroscience of drug addiction will debut here."

*Target America* begins with an in-depth look at drug production, trafficking and money laundering—in a historical and present-day context—from trading opium on the Silk Road in the 1800s to the Colombian cocaine trade that exists today. Guests will also discover the many intricate ways different drugs are produced throughout the world. Displays illustrating drug

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production include a recreated jungle cocaine lab, an Afghan heroin factory and a toxic methamphetamine hotel “cook” room.

Displays that focus on trafficking show how drugs are smuggled in soles of shoes; soaked into fabrics; or even swallowed by drug “mules,” people who perform the dangerous and sometimes lethal task of swallowing balloons full of drugs to transport the illegal cargo. The exhibit also explains where drug money goes and how it is secretly laundered.

From there, the exhibit explores the devastating effects drugs have on our society. Guests view actual wreckage from a drug-related car accident, a tenement crack-house environment, and the bedroom of a young teen that has accessed a Web site that sells illegal drugs.

The terrible toll drugs take on the body is highlighted as well. Guests view common patterns of brain activity in addicts and learn how MRI machines are helping scientists uncover the secrets of addiction and recovery. An interactive display allows guests to compare the effects of certain “rewards” in a normal brain versus an addicted brain, and discover how addictions take control of the brain’s reward circuit, gradually altering motivation and desire. Another interactive display allows guests to hear true stories of addiction and recovery from addicts themselves.

The exhibit touches upon the damage that drug production has on our environment, which is not often addressed including clear cutting of the rain forests in Central and South America to plant coca fields, destruction of natural forests in the U.S. to grow marijuana, and dumping of hazardous waste products into the water table after the manufacture of methamphetamine.

At the end of the exhibit, guests reach the exhibit’s “Discovery Corner,” an area that offers many resources on how the cycle of drug abuse and drug-related violence can be broken with awareness, outreach and treatment.

*Target America* was developed in partnership with The AFFNA DEA Museum Foundation, The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, The National Guard, The National Institute on Drug Abuse, The Office of National Drug Control Policy and The Partnership for a Drug Free America.

**Note to editors:**

The California Science Center and the local DEA will host activities to celebrate Red Ribbon Week from October 23-31. Red Ribbon Week is dedicated to the memory of slain Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, and the cause for which he gave his life; the fight against the violence of drug crime and the misery of addiction. Red Ribbon Week is celebrated nationally. More detailed information on these activities will follow shortly.

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**About the California Science Center**

The California Science Center’s mission is as follows: “We aspire to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences, because we value science as an indispensable tool for understanding our world, accessibility and inclusiveness, and enriching people’s lives.”

**General Info:** The California Science Center and IMAX Theater are located in historic Exposition Park just west of the Harbor (110) Freeway at 700 Exposition Park Drive, Los Angeles. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For recorded information, including IMAX show times, call 323.SCIENCE (323.724-3623). IMAX ticket prices range from \$4.75 to \$8.00. For advance ticket purchases, group rates, or to make reservations for any visiting group of 15 or more (required), call 213.744-2019. Parking is available in the guest lot at Figueroa and 39th / Exposition Park Drive at \$6 per car, \$10 for buses or oversized vehicles. Both the Science Center and IMAX Theater are wheelchair accessible. For further information, please visit our website at [www.californiasciencecenter.org](http://www.californiasciencecenter.org).

**About the Drug Enforcement Administration**

The mission of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is to enforce the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States and bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States, or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States; and to recommend and support non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets.

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