

# FACES & VOICES OF RECOVERY

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## **VH1 Network's "Celebrity Rehab With Dr. Drew" Paints Damaging and Dangerously Inaccurate Picture of Treatment and Recovery from Drug and Alcohol Addiction**

### *Inaccuracies and Misconceptions Abound in Reality Show; Treatment and Recovery Advocates Respond*

**(WASHINGTON, DC – February 4, 2008)** Faces & Voices of Recovery, a national organization of people in recovery from addiction, their families, friends and allies, today announced a National Call-in Day directed at the VH1 network to protest its reality series "Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew." The show, roundly criticized by many in the treatment and recovery communities for sensationalizing and trivializing the treatment process, features celebrities at various stages of addiction. The portrayals in the show are edited for dramatic effect, further sending the signal that addiction is not a serious health issue.

"Faces & Voices of Recovery calls on VH1 to take immediate remedial steps to address the simple truth of Celebrity Rehab – the company is profiting from people struggling with addiction," said Patricia Taylor, Executive Director of the group. "We are asking concerned individuals and organizations to call VH1 on Thursday, February 7 to register their concerns."

In a January letter to VH1 President Tom Calderone, the organization noted, "The show does not accurately portray addiction, nor does it demonstrate the hope that long-term recovery can provide. Further, it reinforces misconceptions, which are inaccurate at best and dangerous at worst. People struggling with addiction should not be a commercial, audience-grabbing pursuit."

The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers' President and CEO Ron Hunsicker, joined Faces & Voices in protesting the program, writing Calderone that the show "takes advantage of and uses people in deep distress because of their addiction to draw in viewers."

"Our attempts to begin a meaningful dialog are falling on deaf ears at VH1," said Taylor. "The steps the network has said it has taken to address concerns raised about the show are half-measures designed only to provide political cover. The show is a tremendous disservice and is irresponsible. That's why we are taking this next step."

"The show is setting back the growing movement Americans from coast-to-coast are rallying behind – that long-term recovery from addiction happens and it's making life better for millions of Americans, their friends, and families," said Faces & Voices board chair Merlyn Karst. "We are

working hard to restore funding for recovery programs and backing measures that would end insurance discrimination, efforts that are seriously compromised when the public sees inaccurate and sensationalized portrayals of addiction and don't see the hope and the reality of recovery.”

Faces & Voices of Recovery and allied organizations are calling on VH1 to:

1. Open and close the show with Dr. Pinsky making an affirmative statement about the many effective treatments available to people still struggling with addiction and the reality of long-term recovery from addiction.
2. Provide information on its Web site about the many ways that people can get help to recover from addiction, including mutual support groups, medication-assisted treatment, professional treatment, and faith, including links to the federal government's Treatment Locator.
3. Add a crawl during the show promoting the link to its Web site for more information on where people can seek help.”

Faces & Voices of Recovery is the national organization of individuals and organizations joining together with a united voice to advocate for public action to deliver the power, possibility and proof of recovery from addiction. [www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org).

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