



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### ***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*

DEA's 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 illegal drug addiction and the myriad of 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."

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 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.

“We are pleased to bring *Target America* to Los Angeles and are proud that the exhibit’s newly expanded section which highlights the neuroscience of drug addiction and its devastating impact on health will debut here,” said Jeffrey Rudolph, President and CEO of the California Science Center.

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.

The Science Center and IMAX Theater are located at Exposition Park in Los Angeles -- open daily from 10am to 5pm except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Admission to Science Center exhibits is free. There is a charge for IMAX tickets. Parking is available in the guest lot at Figueroa and 39th/Exposition Park Drive at \$6 per car. For additional information about the Science Center please call 213-744-7446 or visit [www.californiascience.org](http://www.californiascience.org).