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Hanley Center Acquires the East Coast's First SPECT Scanner to Treat Addiction

Groundbreaking Images Demonstrate That Addiction Is A Brain Illness; Helps Predict Patient Relapse

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., May 25 /PRNewswire/ -- Hanley Center, one of the country's leading nonprofit addiction treatment centers, today announced plans to use **SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography)** scans to capture brain images of patients with alcohol and drug addiction. These pictures help identify blood flow to the areas of the brain involved in addictive behaviors, which Hanley Center's medical staff can use to design more effective patient treatment programs.

"We are introducing the next frontier of addiction treatment in scanning the brain, which is the target organ for this disease," said Dr. Barbara Krantz, chief executive officer and medical director of research at Hanley Center. "By capturing precise blood-flow information and using our baseline knowledge of a healthy brain structure, we can recommend more effective treatments, identify other brain-based disorders that affect addiction and can scientifically document and demonstrate what works and what doesn't in addiction treatment."

While advances in science have shown that addiction is indeed a disease, medical technology commonly used to diagnose other illness has not yet been integrated into standard addiction treatment programs.

"What we're doing here is really diagnosing the physiological problem that contributes to addiction, showing patients with clear pictures how addictive drugs change the brain, and then we can create a plan to attack the problems directly," said Dr. Daniel Amen, who wrote the best-selling book, *Change Your Brain, Change Your Body* and is chief executive officer and medical director of Amen Clinics. "This technology that we have used for years to diagnose many other illnesses will show that addiction is not a character problem, but rather a brain illness."

Amen, a psychiatrist and pioneer in brain imaging, also is partnering with Hanley Center to read and interpret the scans, to train its staff and to conduct research.

SPECT imaging uses nuclear medicine to create a three-dimensional image, which can be shown as cross-sectional slices. They're commonly used in diagnosing heart disease, tumors, dementia, and thyroid or bone diseases.

Short- and long-term substance abuse affects blood flow and metabolism, compromising the central nervous

system -- the brain in particular. By analyzing blood flow to the areas of the brain most impacted by the disease, Hanley Center can customize treatment plans to address specific brain dysfunctions related to addiction. For example, SPECT scans can help identify conditions such as depression or brain trauma, which are both associated with increased incidence of substance abuse, and customize a plan to treat those ailments in conjunction with addiction.

Beyond assisting in addiction diagnoses and treatment, brain imaging can also be used to educate patients by showing them their pre- and post-treatment scans. Hanley also plans to incorporate the images into its prevention and education programs, and use them for research with local partners.

In addition to working with Amen, Hanley is partnering with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Scripps Florida in Jupiter, Fla. to conduct research on addiction recovery outcomes and effective therapies for long-term treatment. Part of that research includes establishing markers that may help doctors predict patient relapse.

About Hanley Center

Headquartered in West Palm Beach, Fla., Hanley Center is a non-profit organization that offers a broad spectrum of programs that are based on the most advanced research in the disease of addiction. From detoxification and medical stabilization to individualized treatment and continuing-care planning, Hanley Center prides itself on offering the most innovative and effective treatment programs designed by professional experts in their respective fields. Unique to the Center is the "Hanley Model of Care," which includes age and gender-specific treatment programs. These tailored programs ensure patients leave equipped with the necessary tools to move forward on their journey of recovery. For more information, please visit: www.hanleycenter.org.

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