

# 4/3 RAHALL Weekly Report

by CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation designating the week of April 3-9, 1983, as "National Drug Abuse Education Week." Drug abuse is one of the most serious health problems we have today. While efforts have been made to strengthen our laws to reduce the flow of illegal drugs, any real successful solution to our current drug problems depends on the education of our society to the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Recent studies indicate that the number of severe cases of drug abuse have increased. In the first nine months of 1982, there were 9,139 heroin overdose victims and 4,615 cocaine overdose cases--a startling increase over 1981 statistics.

Other statistics show that more than just health problems are associated with drug abuse. Between 50 and 60 percent of all property claims are drug related. Drug abuse costs thousands of lives and millions of dollars each year in addition to the pain and suffering of the individual, family, and friends. Almost every American will be touched in one way or another by the effects of drug abuse.

We truly need to focus on the problems of drug abuse, and it is the hope of those of us who have introduced the "Drug Abuse Education Week" resolution, that if we start talking about drugs in a more open and realistic manner, discussing all the effects of legal and illegal drug abuse, then all of us will be better able to make responsible decisions.