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Viacom and Facing Addiction Join U.S. Surgeon General to Address America's Addiction Crisis

On heels of historic government report on alcohol, drugs, and health, a commercial-free television special featuring celebrity talent and keynote speaker U.S. Surgeon General Murthy will air Friday, November 18 across all major Viacom networks

Friday's program will also premiere Viacom-produced "Listen," a public service ad campaign to raise awareness, connect people to help, and inspire hope through stories of recovery

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Global media brand Viacom and national non-profit Facing Addiction announced today the airing of a 30-minute commercial free television special on Friday, November 18 to ignite a national conversation about addiction as a public health epidemic. The event coincides with the release of the [first-ever U.S. Surgeon General report on alcohol, drugs, and health](#).

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20161117006488/en/>

Taped at the Paramount Theater in Los Angeles, California, *Listen: Facing Addiction in America* will combine live discussion with musical performances to spur open dialogue, celebrate the success found in recovery, and empower friends and family to support those struggling with this chronic illness. Dr. Drew Pinsky and MTV News senior correspondent Ana Marie Cox will co-host the event, which will feature U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame guitarist Joe Walsh, award-winning R&B artist Mario, Detroit rapper Royce Da 5'9", comedian Gary Owen, actor Danny Trejo, professional skateboarder Brandon Novak, bar consultant and Spike TV personality Jon Taffer, activist and Logo TV alum Brandon Kneefel, U.S. Army veteran and author Shilo Harris, as well as leading advocates and Americans from across the country who have been impacted by addiction.

Friday's special will also launch "LISTEN, " a national PSA campaign produced by Viacom Velocity, the company's in-house creative content agency, in partnership with the Ad Council, the largest producer of public service campaigns in the U.S. The campaign, which centers on the theme of empathetic listening, will direct audiences to resources where they can find information and get help for themselves or their loved ones.

"Addiction has touched the lives of a large majority of our fans, as it has tens of millions of Americans. We're proud to be working with Facing Addiction and the Surgeon General to break down the barriers of shame and stigma associated with this illness, and to spread the message that recovery is possible for everyone," said Ali Jannello Tuck, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility for Viacom. "Viacom isn't afraid to tackle tough social issues, and in the face of this crisis, we urge people to listen, to inform themselves, and to act with compassion to help save lives."

"Viacom and the Surgeon General are taking unprecedented action this week on what has become a leading cause of death for young people in America," Greg Williams, Co-Founder of Facing Addiction. "As an organization working to bring the best resources together to save lives and support the 45 million Americans directly impacted by addiction, Facing Addiction, realizes that turning the tide on the addiction crisis is going to require new bold action from all sectors. We are grateful to be partnering with these committed stakeholders who will launch a productive and science-informed campaign on addiction like our country has never seen before."

"We need to change the way we see addiction - not as a moral failing but as a chronic illness that we should approach with the same determination as we do diabetes, heart disease, and cancer," said U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy. "All of us have a role to play in ending this crisis. Awareness initiatives, like the Viacom 'Listen' campaign, can help change negative attitudes surrounding addiction."

Listen: Facing Addiction in America will air Friday on BET, Comedy Central, CMT, Logo, MTV, MTV2, MTV Classic, MTV Live, Spike, TV Land, and VH1. Please check your local listings for airtimes.

For more information please visit: www.heretolisten.com

About Viacom

Viacom is home to premier global media brands that create compelling television programs, motion pictures, short-form content, apps, games, consumer products, social media experiences, and other entertainment content for audiences in 180 countries. Viacom's media networks, including Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, MTV, VH1, Spike, BET, CMT, TV Land, Nick at Nite, Nick Jr., Channel 5 (UK), Logo, Nicktoons, TeenNick and Paramount Channel, reach over 3.9 billion cumulative television subscribers worldwide. Paramount Pictures is a major global producer and distributor of filmed entertainment.

For more information about Viacom and its businesses, visit www.viacom.com. Keep up with Viacom news by following Viacom's blog at blog.viacom.com and Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/viacom.

About Facing Addiction

Facing Addiction (www.facingaddiction.org) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to unifying the voice of the over 45 million Americans and their families directly impacted by addiction. Facing Addiction is bringing together the best resources in the field in order to reduce the human and social costs of addiction, every year, until this public health crisis is eliminated. The organization was launched in historic fashion on October 4th, 2015 from the National Mall at the [UNITE to Face Addiction Rally](#) when for the first time tens of thousands of individuals joined together with major musicians, politicians, actors, athletes, models, journalists, and authors to end the collective silence surrounding addiction and recovery.

For more information, visit www.facingaddiction.org.

About the Ad Council

The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshaling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. Having produced literally thousands of PSA campaigns addressing the most pressing social issues of the day, the Ad Council has affected, and continues to affect, tremendous positive change by raising awareness, inspiring action, and saving lives. To learn more about the Ad Council and its campaigns, visit adCouncil.org, like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), or view our PSAs on [YouTube](#).

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