

# Supporting Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

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Community Preceptors: *Mairead Desmond, Executive Director of New Directions Treatment Services;*  
*Mihaela Pundos, CRNP, Substance Use Disorder, Family Medicine, and Mental Health,*  
*New Directions Treatment Services*

## COMMUNITY PARTNER

### New Directions Treatment Services

New Directions Treatment services is an outpatient substance use disorder clinic and treatment center with sites in Wyomissing, PA and in Bethlehem, PA. It is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Patients are cared for by a diverse team of healthcare professionals including physicians, certified registered nurse practitioners (CRNPs), physician assistants (PAs), nurses, and counselors specializing in substance use disorder.

<https://www.ndts.org/>

## EXPERIENCE

New Directions Treatment Services offered a wonderful site in Wyomissing, PA to explore both the clinical aspects of substance use disorder and the social determinants of health involved with care.

- Shadowed, and was supervised by, Mihaela Pundos, CNRP
- Conducted interviews during the physical examination and screened for Hepatitis C
- Learned how to perform: PPD skin tests for tuberculosis, sublocade injections, and blood draws for patients
- Integrated oral health, cardiovascular, smoking cessation, body mass index counseling, mental health, and safety concerns during the interview sessions
- Directed patients to appropriate community resources

## REFLECTION

Bridging the Gaps allowed me to deconstruct the stigma of addiction and regard it as a disease. Through this program, I built rapport with those suffering from substance use disorder and fostered relationships with a diverse team of health professionals.

## BACKGROUND

**United States:** Amount of prescription opioids from a dealer doubled for kids 12-17 between 2015-16

**Pennsylvania:** 19% decrease in drug deaths from 42.9 to 34.6 deaths per 100,000 between 2017-2019

**Berks County:** 130 confirmed deaths from opioid overdose, increase attributed to fentanyl



## CHALLENGES

### Dosing Regimen

- Daily methadone dosing requires reliable transportation to the clinic and flexible work hours
- Hepatitis C treatment, given daily by mouth, is more reliably taken given concurrently with methadone dose in the clinic rather than sending medication home with the patient

### Health Risks

- Cardiovascular risks with methadone treatment
- Mental health monitoring

### Living Situation and Social Life

- Affordable housing
- Maintaining healthy relationships
- Raising children

### Legal

- Follow guidelines while on parole

### Honesty

- Altered urine samples detected by urinalysis may disrupt patient-physician relationships
- Healthcare professionals must assume honesty from their patients

## RESOURCES

1. Haight BR, Learned SM, Laffont CM, et al. Efficacy and safety of a monthly buprenorphine depot injection for opioid use disorder: a multicentre, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase 3 trial. *Lancet*. 2019;393(10173):778-790. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32259-1
2. Coussens NP, Sittampalam GS, Jonson SG, et al. The Opioid Crisis and the Future of Addiction and Pain Therapeutics. *J Pharmacol Exp Ther*. 2019;371(2):396-408. doi:10.1124/jpet.119.259408
3. View County Death Data. Overdosefreepa. <https://www.overdosefreepa.org/>. Accessed July 29, 2022.
4. Pennsylvania Opioids. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Open Data Portal. <https://data.pa.gov/stories/s/9q45-nckt/>. Accessed July 29, 2022.