

Young adults and addiction

This is the second in a two-part series on young adults and opiate addiction.

The first part appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of Horizon HealthPulse.

Opiate addiction in young adults is on the rise. Oxycodone, hydrocodone and codeine were ranked among the 10 most common drugs involved in drug abuse deaths. And the prevalence of heroin addiction is the highest it has been since the 1970s.

Drug addiction shows no discrimination in terms of age, race, socioeconomic status, etc. And Horizon has seen an influx of young adults (typically ages 14 to 24) in its addiction program, many being referred by Drug Court.

“Drug addiction shows no discrimination in terms of age, race, socioeconomic status, etc.”

Opiate addiction is a neurobehavioral syndrome characterized by the repeated, compulsive seeking or the use of an opioid despite adverse social, psychological and/or physical consequences.

“The ability to use these types of drugs safely is very difficult,” says Maria Pasceri, vice president of program development at Horizon. “With opiates, you need them every day, and the probability of misuse leading to death is very high. Plus, they are expensive, so people with addictions are often forced to steal or trade sex for drugs, which can also be dangerous.”

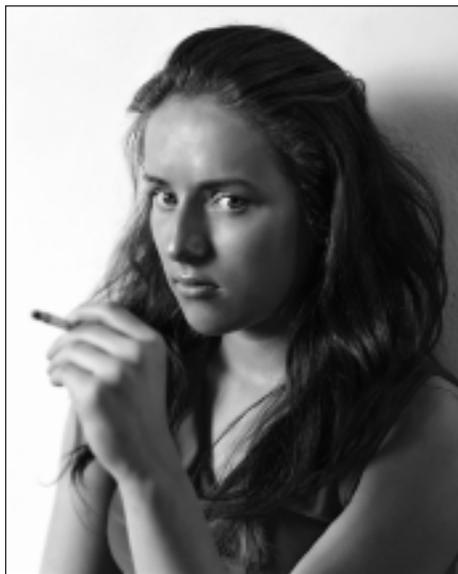
Opiate addiction can often be treated effectively with medications in conjunction with psychosocial services. The brain effectively becomes “deranged” with chronic drug use and doesn’t function as it should. Medications can help “fool” the brain.

Methadone is the most popular medication used to treat this type of addiction (though Horizon does not utilize Methadone in its program) because it blocks the euphoric and tranquilizing effects of the opioid drugs. There are often severe side effects with Methadone, such as nausea, pain and lethargy.

Two new drugs – Naltrexone and Buprenorphine – have shown great promise in treating addictive drugs such as heroin or cocaine. Both help to decrease the urge or craving for the drugs and they also help ease withdrawal symptoms. Side effects are minimal.

“These medications fill the opiate receptors in the brain, satisfying it and, therefore, reducing the cravings,” says Pasceri. Horizon uses both drugs in its recovery program.

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Gordon James Photography

From the desk of...

Anne Constantino
President & CEO

The holiday season is upon us – the season advertised as a “joyous time.”

Unfortunately, not everyone experiences joy during the holidays for many reasons, including depression. Recently in *Parade*, the magazine supplement found in the Sunday *Buffalo News*, there was an article about depression. Actress Ashley Judd revealed in this article she has quietly battled depression for many years. She described a feeling of intense “pain” associated with her depression. Often, when we see family members or friends who are “down,” we think that if they had a more positive attitude, stayed busier or didn’t give in to negative feelings they would feel better. Unfortunately, someone who is experiencing depression cannot just shake it off. He or she needs help. I have written in past columns about the barriers to getting help: problems with health insurance, stigma and concern/fear of taking medication. It is important to remember that mental illness, including depression, is just as real and serious as any other physical illness. If mental illness is affecting you or someone you love, please make every effort to seek help. Most people respond positively to treatment and medication within a few months. Please know that recovery from depression is very possible, and with recovery returns the joy that life has to offer. Best wishes for a healthy and joyous holiday season! ♥

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What is Depression?

Depression is very common, affecting on average one out of every 10 adults annually. Depression affects twice as many women as men. It can strike at any time, at any age, but often first appears during the late teens to mid-20s.

It is also common in older adults.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, depression is defined as a serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act.

Here are the recognizable symptoms of depression:

- A deep feeling of sadness
- A marked loss of interest or pleasure in activities

- Changes in appetite resulting in weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Restlessness or irritability
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide or attempts at suicide

Fortunately, depression is very treatable. For more information on depression, its symptoms and treatments, visit www.horizon-health.org. ♥

MEET OUR Board

Name:

Lisa M. Arnet

Title: Employee

Benefits Specialist

Company: Vanner

Benefits, LLC



On which Horizon board(s) do you serve? "I serve on the Horizon Health Services and Horizon Village boards."

How did you come to be on the boards? "Katie Kenney, who also serves on the Horizon boards, introduced me to Anne Constantino. After hearing the Horizon story, I was hoping to be asked to serve."

What have you found most rewarding about serving on the boards? "These are "hands on" boards, where you can contribute and help make a difference."

What do you want people to know about Horizon? "I want people to know that Horizon saves people's lives! We need to get the word out that even when it seems hopeless, you are not alone. Horizon is here and it works. I have a family member who has used Horizon's services, and their counseling and recommendations on medications gave her a normal life. It also gave us hope as a family." ♥

Subutex and Suboxone are the first narcotic drugs available for the treatment of opiate dependence that can be prescribed in an office setting under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA) of 2000. Until recently, opiate dependence treatments in Schedule II, like methadone, could be dispensed in a very limited number of clinics that specialize in addiction treatment.

Some types of depression run in families, suggesting that a biological vulnerability can be inherited.

Hello
My name is
John Ruffolo
Controller

Cordon James Photography



"Horizon's work environment promotes a healthy work/life balance," says John. "That's important to me and my family."

"I also like the hands-on involvement of the Horizon executive management team," says John. "I have greatly valued the level of guidance and support I have received from them all so far."

John is very upbeat and positive when he talks about the future of Horizon Health Services. "The management team has a great vision for the future of this organization," he says. "And they aggressively work toward bringing Horizon to wherever they believe it needs to be in terms of helping the people of Western New York. I'm proud to be a part of that."

John resides on Grand Island with his wife and two kids, where he is a volunteer softball coach for the Grand Island Little League. ♥

We'd like to introduce you to John Ruffolo, who has been with Horizon in the capacity of controller for just over a year now. John's primary responsibility as controller is to prepare and analyze the financial statements for all three Horizon companies.

Before joining Horizon, John worked for Stampede Presentation Products in Buffalo for five years, four as the company's controller. A notary public, John received his Bachelor's of Business Administration (BBA) in Accounting from Niagara University in 1995.

John says there were "many great reasons to come work for Horizon," but says the work environment was a huge draw.

thePathtoRecovery

Here is the true story of a consumer who overcame many obstacles to turn his life around. Last names have been omitted for privacy.

Liam began his addiction by stealing alcohol from his parents' cupboard and pills from the medicine cabinet at 14. He then moved on to marijuana and eventually tried heroin and cocaine, supporting his habit with money he earned or stole.

"I liked getting high, it made me forget," says Liam, now 19. "I figured I could stop whenever I wanted to, but I didn't want to. I didn't think I had a problem."

Liam was asked to leave his high school, but did eventually get his degree through the AIM program. At first, when Liam entered the Horizon program, he thought it was stupid and he couldn't understand why he had to be in rehab "against his better judgment" when "he really didn't have a problem." He completed the Horizon adolescent program with his parents as well as a short-term inpatient episode at another facility and was then back at Horizon for aftercare. He also began seeing another counselor for behavior issues (he was diagnosed with ADHD)...but Liam wasn't well on his way to recovery just yet.

With his parents out of town and an aunt and uncle staying with him, Liam stole more drugs and his parents' van. His family decided to press charges, and Liam ended up in the Amherst Drug Court. He was remanded to a long-term adolescent inpatient program followed by aftercare at Horizon, where he has been in individual and group counseling and subjected to random tox screens as part of the Drug Court mandate.

"Drug Court has forced Liam to address his addictions," says Liam's dad.

"We've been very proud of the discipline and strength he's shown during his recovery."

"Liam is one of those kids you look at and realize how lucky he really is to have survived," says his Horizon counselor, Marcia Valente. "He's very smart and very clever, and he knew how to work the system. Luckily, he realized in time he needed to change."

He did change. Rather than move back in with his parents, Liam went to live with a friend and his parents, relieving everyone of the pressure they were experiencing under the same roof. He stopped hanging around the friends who encouraged his drug habit. He got a job and he started dating.

"I think the structured, sheltered supportive program really helped Liam," says Marcia. "He's really working hard now and he has goals. He knows what he needs to do and he wants to move forward, not back."

“I think the structured, sheltered supportive program really helped Liam,” says Marcia. “He’s really working hard now and he has goals. He knows what he needs to do and he wants to move forward, not back.”

"I like who I am now," says Liam. "I feel much better about myself. I'm headed in a good direction."

Adds his dad, "We love our son, and we are thrilled to 'have him back.' It's amazing to his mother and me what a difference one year has made.

"We're very encouraged, and we're proud of the good – and sometimes difficult – decisions Liam has been able to make."

Now sober for one full year, Liam is, with Horizon's help, looking at trade schools and is interested in becoming a welder. He's hoping to be in his own apartment very soon and he's still close to his parents, whom he says "have been through as much as – or more than – me." ❤️

Your partners in good health.



It was all smiles as the (gauze!) ribbon was cut at Horizon's new Medical Services Clinic at our City Market location in Niagara Falls. Pictured, from left to right, are Maria Pasceri, Horizon vice president of program development; 138th District Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte; Amber Slichta, program officer, Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York; and Niagara Falls, NY Mayor Vince Anello.

Niagara County residents now have another option for quality healthcare and treatment with the opening of our new full-service Medical Services Clinic in Niagara Falls, NY.

"We believe in a holistic approach when treating the mental health and addiction issues of our consumers," says Horizon CEO Anne Constantino. "That involves providing quality medical care as well, particularly since research indicates the medications used can lead to medical problems such as diabetes. We wanted to be able to offer our consumers a fully-staffed medical clinic where they can receive the healthcare they otherwise might not have access to. We are equally as pleased that we can offer this same level of healthcare to all nearby residents of Niagara County."

The doctors, nurses, therapists and other healthcare staff at Horizon's three Medical Services Clinics (the other locations are on Bailey Avenue and Hertel Avenue in Buffalo) are dedicated to delivering a comprehensive range of diagnostic and treatment services in a compassionate and comfortable environment for anyone seeking medical assistance. Medicaid and most other insurance plans are accepted. The Clinics are certified by the New York State Department of Health.

We are especially grateful to the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, which provided funding for the construction of our Medical Services Clinic in Niagara Falls.

For more information on Horizon's Medical Services Clinics, visit our website at www.horizon-health.org. ❤️

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Young adults qualify for Horizon's recovery program if they are:

- age 18 or older
- have a current diagnosis of opioid dependence with multiple treatment attempts
- are not pregnant
- show reasonable expectation of adherence with medication regimen
- have no current dependence on benzodiazepines or other CNS depressants, including alcohol
- have expressed interest in agonist treatment
- are psychiatrically stable

Horizon begins with a comprehensive behavioral health assessment to document all behavioral health diagnoses. There's also a complete physical exam, including lab testing for HIV, Hepatitis and more. There are daily counseling sessions to start, gradually lessening to weekly sessions, both individual and group. Family members are welcome to take part in any sessions.

"We also work with such organizations as VESID to provide educational and vocational counseling once consumers have completed the recovery program so they can resume a productive lifestyle," says Pasceri. "Recovery is very definitely possible, especially if the consumer really wants to stop." ♥

Women experience depression about twice as often as men. Many hormonal factors may contribute to the increased rate of depression in women, particularly menstrual cycle changes, pregnancy, miscarriage, postpartum period, pre-menopause and menopause. Many women also face additional stresses such as responsibilities both at work and home, single parenthood, and caring for children and for aging parents.

Horizon is the largest and most comprehensive outpatient provider of integrated mental health, chemical dependency and medical services in WNY.

HorizonHealthPulse is published for the employees, consumers, Board and friends of Horizon Health Services. Please share this newsletter with a friend. If you would like additional copies of this newsletter or if you have any questions or comments about its content, please call Pat Chrzanowski at 716-831-1800 or email her at pchrzanowski@horizon-health.org.

President & CEOAnne Constantino
Medical DirectorHak Ko, M.D.



HORIZON
HEALTH SERVICES

HorizonHealthPulse

Volume 4 • Issue #4 • Fall 2006

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INSIDE: Can you spot depression?

Horizon Health Services
3020 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215

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