

Creating an environment to treat the unique needs of young adults dealing with addiction.

The increasingly serious problem of adolescent and young adult drug and alcohol abuse continues to receive local and national media attention. Most families can identify one or more young people about whom they are very concerned in regard to chemical abuse and dependency. Young people are susceptible to the lure of experimenting with drugs but, unfortunately, experimentation often leads to serious abuse and dependency.

- ▶ The majority of teen substance abusers – more than 80 percent of girls – have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused.
- ▶ As many as 70 percent of adolescent substance abusers also have a mental health issue, such as ADD, bipolar disorder or PTSD.
- ▶ A teen with a family history of alcoholism has a 50 percent risk of becoming an alcoholic and adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol-dependent later in life.
- ▶ Since 1992, a new kind of drug abuse has tripled in popularity among teenagers: the mixing of controlled prescription drugs such as opiate painkillers, tranquilizers and stimulants.

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And, of the estimated 175,000 who do receive treatment, only about 25 percent remain in treatment for three months; less than 50 percent stay for even six weeks, according to the Office of Applied Statistics.



Rich Pozak (second from left) conducts a young adult group session at Horizon Village.

Many adolescent and young adult chemical abusers often have mental health and other issues (see side box) that make diagnosis and effective treatment very difficult. For treatment to be effective, it must be fully integrated so as to address the issues of education, health, mental health and legalities.

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From the desk of...

Anne Constantino
President & CEO

The new HBO documentary series, *Addiction*, explores the current state of addiction in America and includes the latest thinking on treatment and recovery by leading experts.

The series and website (www.hbo.com/addiction/) offer valuable insight and information on the devastation of addiction and the hope of treatment and recovery. Included on the website are these startling statistics:

- ▶ More than 23 million people each year struggle with addiction; only 10 percent get treatment.
- ▶ Ninety-five percent of those dependent on alcohol or drugs started before they were 20 years old.
- ▶ \$276 billion was spent or lost in 2005 on healthcare, lost productivity, premature death, auto accidents and crime relating to drug and alcohol.

“Emotional” and “Devastating/Horrible” are the words most often used to describe the effects of a family member’s addiction. The statistics and the stories highlighted in this documentary are heartbreaking, overwhelming and very realistic. Unfortunately, addiction is not a problem that affects “someone else’s family.” It is a problem that is very personal to most of us because it is about our family, our children, our loved ones, our friends. ♥



Finding effective ways to deliver health services to those most vulnerable

Several state and local health policy-makers, managed care organizations and providers (including Horizon) have implemented programs designed to address both the behavioral (mental and substance abuse disorder) and physical health needs of individuals.

As the topic of integrated physical and behavioral health garners increasing attention, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) sought assistance in understanding the facets of existing integrated services initiatives so as to have knowledge of the approaches, treatment models and services used to achieve integration. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving health and health care, RWJF supports training, education, research and projects

that demonstrate effective ways to deliver health services, especially for the most vulnerable among us.

Health Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm specializing in complex health care program and policy issues, compiled a report entitled *Integrating Publicly Funded Physical and Behavioral Services: A Description of Selected Initiatives*, which identifies and describes existing models of publicly funded integrated service programs. Horizon was interviewed for and included in the report because RWJF was interested in "unique approaches to providing integrated medical and behavioral healthcare services." To view the complete report, visit www.healthmanagement.com. ❤️

MEET OUR Board

Name: Joseph S. Sankoh

Title: Associate Professor of Political Science, History & Government Dept.; and Director, Department of Academic Service Learning

Company: Daemen College

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

How did you come to be on the boards? "I was recommended by one of my colleagues who previously served as a Horizon board member."

What have you found most rewarding about serving on the boards? "What is most rewarding to me as a board member is the feeling of satisfaction for contributing to the continuous success and growth of Horizon, and the less fortunate people we serve everyday."

What do you want people to know about Horizon? "I want people to know that Horizon is one of the leading organizations in the area of mental health in the country today. They love and care very much about the clients they serve each day, as well as the local communities they serve. In sum, Horizon staff members have 'hearts for the mentally ill.'" ❤️



Hello
My name is
Christopher Frigon, LCSW
Program Director
Boulevard Counseling Center

Gordon James Photography



organizations around Western New York that do all that we do or do it as well. We are able to help a lot of people who might not otherwise find this level of care."

Chris says senior management at Horizon is constantly on the lookout for ways to adapt its program to better meet the needs of its consumers, and he is impressed at Horizon's philosophy to provide services to consumers in need, regardless of their means to pay. "The people at Horizon really and truly care about the consumers we serve, which is one of the biggest reasons I enjoy working here," says Chris, who also said he appreciates the way Horizon "is dedicated to staff development and encouraging all employees to increase skill levels and progress within the agency."

In addition to his job duties at Horizon, Chris has been in private practice as a mental health counselor for three years, and also provides group counseling at Lutheran Services in Williamsville.

Working at Horizon is a family affair in the Frigon household; Chris' wife, Carrie, is a Niagara County Court Liaison based out of Horizon's Tonawanda Counseling Center. Chris and Carrie have two children and live in Tonawanda. ❤️

Chris Frigon started at Horizon in the summer of 2000 as a floating counselor aide, prior to graduating from the University at Buffalo with a Master's Degree in Social Work. (He also holds a BA Degree in Psychology from UB.) Today, as program director at the agency's Boulevard Counseling Center (BCC), Chris manages a fully-staffed mental health clinic that sees, on average, 175 consumers each week, offering services that range from individual and group counseling to medication management to referrals to Horizon's Vocational Program and Medical Clinics. The BCC is fully integrated with Horizon's addiction program so as to offer consumers complete holistic care, and is currently working to develop an Intensive Outpatient Program for both preventive and step-down services for people with psychiatric risk.

"I really am grateful for the diverse level of services Horizon is able to offer our consumers," says Chris. "There are few

According to the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, only 13.5% of the regional need for intensive residential treatment services for alcohol and drug abuse is currently met.

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.

It is very common for teenagers to turn to drugs and/or alcohol after a tragic, life-changing event, and that's just what happened to Dan. Now in his early twenties, Dan started drinking and smoking marijuana after his dad passed away when Dan was 16. He moved back in with his mother and, as he puts it, "fell into the wrong crowd and began using even more."

"When I used, I didn't have to think or feel," says Dan. "I just had fun and forgot about the pain. I didn't think I had a problem." His mother tried to help, but Dan wouldn't listen to her and she had little control over his time and activities.

As Dan's habit increased, so did his problems. He was kicked off the wrestling team and eventually suspended from high school. Feeling pressure from his peers, Dan began robbing stores to get the money to feed his habit. And, as is also very common for teen users, Dan eventually got caught.

He was placed on probation, which he soon violated. He was sent to rehabilitation, but had no interest in participating and soon began telling lies to "get through it quickly." Eventually he landed in drug court and ended up in jail. And that's when Dan began to realize just how serious his situation was.

"I graduated from drug court, but was still subject to regular urine tests and probation," says Dan. "I had to restart drug court and still thought I could beat the system. I was wrong, and that mistake landed me in an inpatient facility."

When he completed that program, he was sent to Horizon Village and, says Dan, he was not happy to have to undergo more

therapy and more "group b.s." but it beat going to jail.

The first few weeks at the Village, Dan was not a willing participant. But he soon started paying attention and participated by telling the truth. "One of the counselors made a comment about 'if you bring the body, the mind will soon follow,'" says Dan. "That made me realize that addiction is a disease and that Horizon was the best thing to happen to me."

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"Dan had a revelation while at the Village," says Paige Prentice, director. "And once he realized he was dealing with an illness, he really turned a corner."

"It helped to be around others in similar situations on a daily basis," says Dan. "I learned from the experiences of older people and I saw that they're not just talking the talk...they are actually walking the walk and working to fix their lives. It helped me to see what I want and what I don't want."

Today, Dan is living in a halfway house, with plans to enroll in school either in criminal justice or the culinary arts. He understands that addiction is a progressive illness and that the bigger the addiction, the worse things that will happen.

"I want people to know that rehab is not a bad place, it is not for 'quitters,'" says Dan. "You can turn your life around while you're still young and have it all: a family, a career and a life." ♥

Creating an environment (continued from page 1)

It is Horizon's vision to address this problem and develop a facility to serve the young adult population (18-25) at Horizon Village, our inpatient facility. National and regional trends indicate an increased demand for these services, and our experience tells us there is a serious need in WNY. We know that if addiction is left untreated, these young adults and their families will continue to suffer.

"Our experience in delivering chemical dependency services at Horizon Village has shown a 12-year incremental increase in the number of young adults seeking treatment," says Horizon President and CEO, Anne Constantino. "Our experience has also demonstrated the unique challenges youth present to the delivery of effective treatment and ongoing recovery, including emotional alienation and distrust that complicates establishment of alliances and exploration of emotional factors; emotional immaturity and poor impulse control that results in minimal patience, poor perseverance, high-risk behavior and aggressiveness and altercations and poor social skills, just to name a few."

"We intend to provide treatment programming in the proposed facility that is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of young adults," adds Horizon Village Director, Paige Prentice. "In contrast with our average 90-day residential stay, we project a six-month average stay for young adults."

More information will be forthcoming in future issues of this newsletter; in the meantime, persons and organizations interested in learning more about this should contact Paige Prentice at 716.731.2030. At Horizon Village, the miracle of recovery is witnessed daily. ♥

The beliefs that antidepressants will change your personality or not allow you to feel are myths. If you truly need antidepressants, they should make you feel better, not worse.

Been to our website lately?

Horizon's website is full of helpful information on chemical dependency, alcoholism, gambling, mental health issues and so much more. We're constantly updating our site to provide valuable and critical information regarding these topics and the services we provide to assist consumers and their families, as well as links to the websites of other helpful organizations.



Here are five things you'll find on our website:

- Self-tests for alcohol, chemical dependency and gambling addiction and for mental health problems.
- Information on co-dependency services for family members of those with addiction.
- Horizon can help individuals with mental health and chemical dependency disabilities enter or re-enter the workforce through our Career Opportunity Centers.
- A virtual tour of Horizon Village, our residential drug treatment program in Sanborn, NY.
- What to expect from your first visit to a Horizon clinic.

Visit our website often at www.horizon-health.org.

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.



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INSIDE: The epidemic of youth addiction

Horizon Health Services
3020 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215

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