A First Step to Recovery: Inpatient Withdrawal Assistance

Last year 3,050 people in Ohio died from an overdose according to the Attorney General. And Wayne County, with its rolling panoramic countryside, sizeable Amish population and plethora of small close-knit communities, was not spared. “We are not immune to the same issues that larger metropolitan areas are facing,” said Donald Hall, director of Medway. “In my 22 years of law enforcement, this current cycle is unlike anything I have ever seen,” and if anything “is under reported.”

Wooster Community Hospital (WCH) was all too aware of the growing drug problem as well and while they had been treating and resuscitating patients at a record rate, they wanted to be part of a broader solution. “We felt we could do more as a community hospital,” said Shelly Huff, Vice President of Patient Services/CNO. “We want to see them break the cycle of addiction and get the help they need.” So began a partnership with New Vision.

New Vision is a company with a “vision of helping people withdraw safely from drug and alcohol addiction,” said Carol Ann Lewis, Service Coordinator at WCH. They contract with hospitals to train medical staff and provide employees to oversee their medical stabilization programs.

In March, with the help of New Vision, WCH opened a voluntary medical stabilization unit to help patients take that first step toward a drug-free life. “The fear of experiencing withdrawal is a huge barrier for people wanting to get well,” said Huff. “If we can get them through withdrawal as comfortable as possible, there’s a good chance we can assist them in getting them to the next step of recovery.”

A typical hospital stay is 3-5 days, said Huff. When a patient is admitted, they undergo strict screening criteria and must demonstrate “the motivation to get better.” All patients are closely monitored by physicians and nurses with the goal of keeping them medically stable throughout their stay.

After completing medical stabilization, patients are then connected with numerous resources in the community to provide the next level of care, whether that is in an inpatient or outpatient setting.

The program has been successful because it includes a “next step,” said Lewis. “We refer our patients to intensive outpatient programs, longer-term rehab or whatever is preferred by the patient. The Wooster community has ongoing treatment resources available which are a great compliment to the services we provide.”

WCH was a good fit for the program because they were “willing to do the hard work of confronting this epidemic head on,” said Lewis. “They understand the growing number of people struggling with addiction. We have had a good working relationship with them from day one.”

The service has seen about 20 enrollees since its inception and Huff is hopeful long-term results will be positive.

“I think that having New Vision in this county is very positive and needed,” said Hall. “The problems we face today take a community effort to address and I feel that the community has been very progressive in helping with the current issues.”