

OUTREACH EFFORTS WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN ADDICTION TREATMENT PROGRAMS

BY ZACK DEMARS

The Bulletin
BestCare, which has provided drug addiction treatment in the region since 1997, is set to receive the largest share of the more than \$15 million distributed to Central Oregon under Measure 110 for addiction services. That's about \$5.5 million for Deschutes County, plus another \$2 million for services in Jefferson County and \$1.5 million for Crook County.

Barrett Hamilton is leading one of BestCare's biggest Measure 110 endeavors: A new Bend "engagement center," where people with addiction can get assistance with whatever they need to stay safe, from basic needs to employment assistance, to rapid access to BestCare's outpatient addiction treatment services right across the hall.

Prior to the Measure 110 expansion, Hamilton offered similar services out of a van in Redmond.

"This will be a bigger ver-

sion of that," Hamilton said. "This will be a place they can come, and we'll just try to remove the barriers that are keeping them stuck in their addiction and when they realize 'OK, I need detox or I need treatment or I need mental health,' we can act right then."

The idea of relying on outreach and engagement to get people into treatment rather than law enforcement or punishment appeals to Hamilton's own path to addiction recovery.

"I was in active addiction for 27 years. I've been in jail, in prison, and it never stopped me," Hamilton said. "But what has worked in those 27 years: I was sober two different times. ... both times I went to treatment and figured it out. This time I didn't make the same mistakes I made last time."

BestCare has some experience offering people with addiction a range of services in hopes of helping them on the path to recovery. The orga-



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BestCare Community Engagement Team Care Manager Barrett Hamilton, right, works with Wiley Dave during outreach on Hunnell Road in Bend in early November.

nization has operated an engagement team in St. Charles hospitals' emergency floors for a little over two years.

The premise of that work is fairly simple: Hospital social workers call the BestCare team whenever someone comes into the emergency room with a drug- or alcohol-related issue. An engagement team staff member meets the individual at their bedside and walks through

what the person might need.

One learning curve of operating that program is defining what "success" looks like for an individual client, according to Kristina Van Alstine, the program's case manager. While people might not initially want to get into addiction treatment, the outreach efforts build connections so those people have resources to do so if they wish, she said.

"I think, if people can get

away from the black and white thinking of what behavioral health is and look at the gray and see that it's not the same for everybody, I think that maybe we will have success in taking care of the substance use epidemic," a Alstine said.

Since it started, the engagement team has seen about 600 people in the emergency room, Van Alstine said. A little over half of those had some kind of further relationship with the BestCare team. For some, that was as simple as follow-up phone calls or peer support meetings. For about 9% of those who engaged, that was a connection to medication supported recovery services, 16% received access to detox services, and about 37% received some kind of substance use treatment.

For BestCare Executive Director Rick Treleaven, the project of Measure 110 is a statewide "social experiment" in pivoting from a historically criminal-justice-oriented response to addiction.

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— Barrett Hamilton, leading one of BestCare's biggest Measure 110 endeavors

"And so we're going to stop that, and we're going to set up a system of engagement and outreach and harm reduction to that population with the hopes of decreasing the damage of drugs and alcohol and hopefully engaging a certain percentage of those people into recovery-based services," Treleaven said.

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About 70% of new Oregon patients in October were able to be seen within two days of their initial call (though the company says it wants that figure to be 100% for services funded by Measure 110). About 60% of the company's Oregon patients remain in its care six months later — double the national average, the company said.

Another treatment provider will be using Measure 110 funds to expand into the Deschutes County Jail.

Ideal Option is receiving about \$1.2 million of the Deschutes County allocation to expand its community outreach program, offer a clinic for accessing addiction treatment medication at a Safeway in Bend and, if they can find a location to rent, open a

new clinic in Redmond.

The organization also plans to begin offering its services in partnership with the medical staff at the Deschutes County jail. The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office doesn't have a precise estimate but, even with the decriminalization of drug possession, many people in the jail do have some kind of substance use issue. (Statewide estimates offer some idea of what that population might be: About half of the state's prison population has an addiction of some kind.)

Ideal Option has tried the in-jail treatment program before. In Benton County, in Eastern Washington, 68% of inmates who were referred to Ideal Option over the course of a year went to their appointment after being released.

Half of those people were retained in treatment for a month or more and, for the 1,389 individuals served by the program and released from jail, there had only been 121 new charges filed.

"If we can use the medication assisted treatment to take away the cravings for whatever substance they're using, it easier for them to not go out seeking the drugs, or whatever they're addicted to, and they can start hopefully having more of a normal life," said Sgt. Jayson Janes, a spokesperson for the sheriff's office.

"In the long run, that's what we want, is people to kick their addiction and be able to live a good life."

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Lisa Bradley, clinical manager of Healing Reins, with therapy horse Yukon on their ranch near Tumalo last month. "He has a pretty different personality, he has many different shades," Bradley said of Yukon, who will be a part of the nonprofit's new substance use disorder program.



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