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Medication Assisted Treatment Clinic comes to Kingman

The facility isn't a traditional methadone clinic, rather, it provides clients with a wide range of services to get them back on their feet



Haley Horton, regional operations director for Community Medical Services, sits in front of CMS' location where it will house its Medication Assisted Treatment Clinic. (Photo by Vanessa Espinoza/Daily Miner)



By Travis Rains

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Addressing the opioid epidemic and the dependencies associated with its prevalence is not a sprint, nor is there a one-size-fits all approach to helping those seeking treatment. That's why the Community Medical Services Medication Assisted Treatment Clinic coming to Kingman tackles the issue by offering a wide range of services aimed at sustainable and lasting results.

Haley Horton, regional operations director for Community Medical Services, explained that while Community Medical Services began and is based in Arizona, it has expanded its facilities across the country to states including Montana, Alaska, North Dakota, Ohio, Indiana and more.

Horton said Steward Health Choice and Arizona Complete Health approached CMS and asked it to look at places like Kingman to see if there was a need for a treatment center.

"What we normally look at for our market research is overdose data," Horton said. "That captures, of course, only reported overdoses. We believe that number to be much lower than the actual prevalence. Then we talk with the chief of police, we talk with emergency medicine, to see what they're seeing out in the community."

CMS also looks at what other services are available in the community. For Kingman, Horton specifically noted that Southwest Behavioral Health and Services provides support similar to that offered by Community Medical Services. Horton said Southwest is often at capacity, and paired with information gathered from first responders, there was a need for a treatment facility in Kingman.

"It is a bit of a gamble and a risk to move into any community because we just don't know the numbers," Horton said. "What we do know is that less than 20% of folks who have opioid use disorders actually seek treatment. So if we see there's a number in a

particular area, we know that only about 20 percent of those folks are actually in treatment. So there's an 80% market we're not touching."

The treatment clinic set to open in Kingman in late June is not a stereotypical methadone clinic, Horton explained. Aside from medication assisted treatment, CMS will offer counseling, peer support, employment assistance and more.

"Clients will come to us daily for a period of time, that's where we assess stability, we engage them in services," she said. "We are not a dose-and-go type of clinic, we are not a traditional methadone clinic. We really engage our clients. They are required to participate in the counseling services as part of our program."

Clients are also paired with a peer who can assist them with things like transportation or general questions and concerns. The peer is someone who can say "I've been through this, what do you need?"

However, Horton said an important part of the process is medical assisted treatment. She said that in cases where opioids or prescribed medications are not taken per doctor instruction, addiction can develop. From there, the body becomes dependent on those drugs.

"So we're actually not replacing an addiction, we are providing a medication that helps block the receptors in the brain that scream to the person 'Use, use, use, you need opioids.' And when you talk to our clients, they articulate it in that way."

The medications used by Community Medical Services, Methadone, Suboxone and Vivitrol, help to block those receptors so there is no "high" from the drug.

"Even if a person was to use illicitly while on the medications, they often don't experience that high," Horton said. "So then, realistically, they've wasted the money on

using. The goal is to get them to a place where they're not feeling withdrawals and cravings, and that there isn't an effect of illicit use so then they don't use."

Clients stay involved with treatment at CMS for various amounts of time. Horton said some stay for six months before being tapered off of medication while others stay for years.

"Once a person has achieved dose stability, they have achieved their goals in counseling, they have some sort of stable housing, they have employment or they're back in school, then we start to talk with them about readiness to taper down," Horton said.

The "gold standard" for Community Medical Services is the pairing of medication assisted treatment and counseling. While assisted treatment or counseling does help, addressing the full scope of the issue is best accomplished when both are utilized.

"Just being on medication is not going to help you find work, it's not going to help you in your relationships," Horton said. "That is important to maintain recovery. The medications can go away, but you still have to have these skills to function and be a productive member of society."

And so the counseling serves to eliminate consequences of substance abuse like homelessness, unemployment and relationship issues.

"We really strive to be good stewards of the community," Horton said. "We're not a company that's come in trying to take over opioid treatment. We want to be members of this community."

Those with questions or who would like more information can contact Horton at 520-270-0976.

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