

An adaptive spirit

By James Dougherty, Vice President



Those in treatment for chemical dependency often hear from their counselors about *adapting*... adapting to new behaviors, to positive changes, to new ways of thinking, to a new

lifestyle in recovery. At Marworth, we practice what we preach.

As you've read, we're seeing more people abusing opiates and more young adults coming through our doors. In response, our clinical and counseling teams have made tremendous strides to adapt to the needs of a changing patient population.

Our physicians are at the forefront of educating those addicted to opioids and their loved ones about overdose reversal with naloxone. Our Recreational Therapy group is adding new activities that appeal to the younger generation (disc golf, anyone?) and they will be adding a climbing wall as soon as funds are raised.

We work hard to foster an adaptive spirit in those who seek help here, so that they are successful in recovery. That same outlook is essential for Marworth to grow and thrive as a treatment center that can meet the unique needs of every person who enters our doors.

Thank you in advance for any donation you might give that will help us continue to adapt to the ever-evolving field of addiction treatment. We hope you enjoyed a safe and sober holiday season.

Funding for recreational therapy initiatives

In response to the growing young adult population, Marworth just kicked off a campaign to raise \$60,000 to enhance its recreational therapy programs. The funds are earmarked to purchase a climbing wall, additional sand trays and more instruments for music therapy, as well as making improvements to the current low-elements ropes course and increasing the availability of acupuncture. These therapeutic components are especially relatable to young adults as they place an emphasis on fitness, stress management and trust.

There are already early commitments to this fundraising campaign, including one from the Margaret Briggs Foundation, which recently approved a match grant of \$12,500. The funds are contingent upon Marworth raising another \$12,500 to match the grant.

The Margaret Briggs Foundation of Scranton, Pa. awards grants to local charitable organizations seeking to advance innovative programs that impact residents and institutions in Lackawanna County. The foundation's areas of interest include health, education, arts, social welfare and children and youth programs.

To fully fund these recreational therapy initiatives by June 2015, Marworth is turning to alumni for additional support. If you are interested in contributing to the Therapeutic Activities Program Fund, please return the enclosed form or contact Cheryl Connolly, Senior Director of Advancement, Northeast, Geisinger Health System Foundation, at 570-808-7868 or caconnolly@marworth.org. Other options for giving to Marworth remain available, including the Gift of Hope Scholarship Endowment. Donations can also be made online at geisinger.org/100.

In the news

News outlets in Pennsylvania turned to Marworth when reporting about an increase in heroin use in the area.

In July, both medical director Margaret Jarvis, MD, and outpatient program coordinator Bill Poray, LCSW, CAC, were interviewed by *The Scranton Times-Tribune* for a feature series about the ramifications of heroin addiction. Poray was also profiled in the series about his experiences with addiction and counseling, while Dr. Jarvis was featured on a supplementary web video.

Additionally, *The Milton Standard-Journal* cited associate medical director David Withers, MD, in a September article about heroin abuse in people over age 50.

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MESSENGER

Charting the course for alcohol & chemical dependency treatment

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Overcoming walls

The Wall of Addiction is part of the ropes course at Marworth and is a highlight for many who have sought treatment. A component of the Recreational Therapy program, the ropes course is a series of team challenges on the campus grounds. While there are 12 different challenges throughout the course, the Wall best embodies how physical challenges can aid in recovery from alcohol and chemical dependency.

When a group arrives at the Wall, they identify and discuss any personal barriers, or "walls," they have in their lives preventing them from getting clean. According to Lori Pilosi, MS, CTRS, Lead Recreation Therapist, common barriers include guilt, shame, anger and denial. The group then works as a team to help each other physically climb over the Wall of Addiction.

After the challenge, the group debriefs by discussing what methods worked best to help each other get over the Wall. They review how the core aspects of teamwork—support, trust and asking for help—can apply to overcoming their personal barriers. The group participants begin to realize that it's impossible to push past their personal barriers on their own and that accepting the support of others, such as family members and Alcoholics Anonymous, is vital to achieving a sober, happy life.

This process of relating personal experiences and emotions to an activity is referred to as *metaphoric learning* and is a powerful tool in addiction treatment.

Are you experiencing any walls in your recovery today? How can you apply what you learned in the Wall of Addiction challenge to overcome those barriers now?

More young adults needing addiction treatment

Addiction treatment centers across the country, Marworth included, are seeing more people in the 18 to 25 age range than ever before. At Marworth, young adults now make up as much as a quarter of the entire inpatient population. The substances of choice for many young adults are often street drugs such as heroin or other opiates.

These young adults have unique challenges compared to older adults in treatment. The age gap creates significant personality differences, and there is a different detox process for opiates. By grouping young adults together in treatment, we create a social setting with peers that is similar to what they'll experience after inpatient treatment.

The Recreational Therapy team has been instrumental in developing programming to engage the young adult population, such as:

- Acupuncture
- Cooking
- Fitness Center groups
- Music and film appreciation
- Sand tray therapy
- Sports (disc golf, flag football, ultimate Frisbee)

Group discussions often revolve around *addictive leisure* versus *healthy leisure*. Many young adults report they abandoned activities they once enjoyed, such as art or

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Sand tray therapy

One of the most recent therapeutic techniques added at Marworth is *sand tray therapy*. This type of expressive therapy is closely linked to music therapy in that it allows individuals to express themselves without words.

By manipulating sand and figurines in a tray to build miniature scenes and landscapes, the individual struggling with addiction has the opportunity to portray feelings and experiences that are difficult to verbalize. It helps promote anxiety reduction, communication, emotional release, safety and containment, self-control, and therapeutic metaphors.

In addiction treatment, sand tray therapy is beneficial to a wide variety of individuals, including those struggling with:

- Addiction
- Attachment issues
- Confronting painful emotions
- Defense mechanisms
- Grief and loss
- Trauma
- Verbal communication

Sand tray therapy, also known as the world technique, was developed in Switzerland by Dora Kalff, a Jungian analyst, during the 1950s.

New emergency tool for opioid overdose

As the abuse of heroin and other opioids rises, so too does the incidence of overdose. To combat the fatality of overdoses, many emergency room doctors, first responders and addiction treatment centers are turning to naloxone, commonly known as Narcan®, for help.

If an individual is overdosing on heroin or other opioid drugs such as oxycodone or morphine, naloxone can be administered to reverse the overdose.

At Marworth, patients with an addiction to opioids are now offered a prescription for naloxone before discharge to be kept on hand in the event of a relapse that results in an overdose. As part of their participation in the family program, family members learn how to identify an overdose and how to use the injection on their loved one. Most importantly, patients and families receive education on preventing relapse in the first place.

“Narcan is just one tool for those struggling with addiction to opioids,” said Joseph Valdez, MD, Addiction Medicine Fellow at Marworth. “It’s best to have it on hand and not need it, but in an emergency, Narcan can save a life.”

While offering prescriptions for naloxone to those in recovery for opioid abuse may be controversial, studies on

its use have not shown an increase in relapse¹.

How does naloxone work?

Simply put, a naloxone injection is like an EpiPen® for an overdose. It covers the opioid receptors to reverse the effects of opioids in the body within three to five minutes. While it is safe, the injection will put the individual into an instant withdrawal. Anyone who receives a naloxone injection should immediately be taken to a hospital for medical observation during the withdrawal process.

How to avoid overdose:

- Only take medicine prescribed to you.
- Don’t take more medication than instructed by your healthcare provider.
- Call a doctor if you have pain that worsens.
- Never mix pain medication with alcohol.
- Avoid sleeping pills when taking pain medicine.
- Dispose of unused medications.
- Store your medicine in a secure place.
- Learn how to use naloxone (Narcan).
- Teach your family and friends how to respond to an overdose.

Signs of an overdose:

- Slow, shallow or erratic breathing
- Pale or bluish skin
- Slow heartbeat, low blood pressure
- Won’t wake up or respond
- Tiny, pinpoint pupils

¹ Maxwell S, Bigg D, Stanczykiewicz K, Carlberg-Racich S. “Prescribing naloxone to actively injecting heroin users: a program to reduce heroin overdose deaths.” *Journal of Addictive Diseases* (2006) 25 (3): 89-96.



Supporting a health system

As an entity of Geisinger Health System, Marworth has a unique opportunity to offer addiction support on multiple levels, including individuals struggling with chemical dependency and healthcare providers who may encounter patients with an addiction.

Marworth counselor Michelle Kwiec, LCSW, CADC, has been partnering with the Medical Pain Management department at Geisinger to build a Multidisciplinary Pain Program. This initiative offers a series of educational seminars for Geisinger patients being treated for chronic pain conditions. The seminars feature a variety of medical and lifestyle topics to empower chronic pain sufferers to be more active in their health. Kwiec presents several topics, including avoiding medication misuse or abuse, co-occurring addiction, sleep hygiene, behavioral pacing and smoking cessation. Topics presented by other system health experts include physical therapy techniques, nutrition, psychology, family relationships and communication.

“There is no silver bullet or cure for chronic pain,” explains Kwiec. “But this program helps patients reach better pain control through a variety of treatment methods. Learning how to identify and prevent addictive behavior is vital for anyone taking pain medications.”

Additionally, Kwiec, as well as Margaret Jarvis, MD, Medical Director, and David Withers, MD, Associate Medical Director, contributed to Geisinger’s Comprehensive Pain Committee. The goal of this group is to implement a plan to reduce costs, emergency department visits, and the use of narcotics, while at the same time improving satisfaction for patients with chronic pain. Many elements of the program are already operating throughout the Geisinger system, including the Multidisciplinary Pain Program, with others set to be implemented throughout 2015.

Kwiec also continues in her role as Marworth’s outreach coordinator, where she consults with patients at several of Geisinger’s primary care offices who may be struggling with an addiction.

Fellow profile: Joseph Valdez, MD

Joseph Valdez, MD, joined Marworth’s Addiction Medicine Fellowship program in July 2014 and will serve as part of the treatment center’s clinical team for a full year.

Board certified in family medicine, Dr. Valdez earned his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and also holds a master’s degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Prior to coming to Marworth, he completed a residency in family medicine at the University of Vermont at Burlington.

During his residency, Dr. Valdez took notice of the impact addiction had on both the addicted individuals and their families.

“Seeing how prevalent addiction was during my residency and knowing how my own family has been touched by alcoholism were my inspirations to go into addiction medicine,” said Dr. Valdez.

While at Marworth, Dr. Valdez is working on several special projects, including introducing naloxone (Narcan®) education during the family programs as well as a research study to learn how comfortable

people are discussing addiction with their primary care doctor. He also conducts medical evaluations and supervises patients going through medical detoxifications.

Nearly halfway through his fellowship term, Dr. Valdez is happy in the decision to pursue the addiction medicine specialty at Marworth.

“It’s exceeding my expectations and I’m learning so much by interacting with the people in treatment,” he said. “To hear how addiction impacts them and see their genuine efforts to get well continues to inspire me.”

As for his career path after Marworth, Dr. Valdez is exploring options but envisions himself continuing to work in a residential treatment setting.

Physicians interested in applying for a American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM) accredited, one-year fellowship in addiction medicine at Marworth, can learn more at geisinger.edu/fellowships/addiction.

More young adults needing addiction treatment

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athletics, to pursue a lifestyle with drugs and alcohol instead. Part of treatment is to identify healthy activities they can do sober after leaving Marworth.

“Individuals in this age group usually have a high energy level,” said Lori Pilosi, MS, CTRS, Lead Recreation Therapist. “Playing sports is a positive way for them to expend that energy, while learning key recovery skills such as teamwork.”

Another popular group activity with young adults is music appreciation where they relate to lyrics in songs that have strong recovery themes.