

OnTrackNews

Information on Addiction Treatment and Recovery Services

WINTER 2020

I need help!
Where do I start?

HOME Program:
30 years of helping
young mothers

The way forward:
Whole-person care
and more



About OnTrack Rogue Valley

Our mission is to empower individuals and families to overcome addiction, poverty and social stigma through integrative counseling, education, skills training and stable housing that sustain recovery.

For information and appointments:

Medford (541) 772-1777

Grants Pass and Cave Junction (541) 955-9227

Outpatient Services for Adults

Substance abuse and addiction, DUII counseling and education, Domestic Abuse Alternatives Program (DAAP), Anger Management, Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) supportive counseling, family counseling.

Teens Program

Providing safe, emotional support and education about addiction, encouraging the adolescents in the creation of treatment planning, thereby increasing the opportunity of positive life choices for success.

Residential Recovery Programs

The HOME program for new and expecting mothers and their children, and the Dad's program serving custodial fathers and their children (pre-K and under), are in Medford. A coed adults-only residential facility is in Grants Pass.

Housing Opportunities

Our transitional and long-term housing communities are for individuals and households with a history of recovery who receive supportive services from a referring agency in the community. Tenants must be sober and in recovery.

For information and appointments:

Medford (541) 772-1777

Grants Pass and Cave Junction (541) 955-9227

or visit www.ontrackroguevalley.org

Evening and Saturday appointments available in our Medford location!



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(541) 772-1777

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I Need Help – Where Do I Start?

You've made the crucial first step of deciding to get help for your addiction. Now what? Take a deep breath and know that you are not alone. Help is out there.

At OnTrack Rogue Valley, professionally trained counselors and peer support specialists are ready to help you achieve a lasting recovery and learn the life skills you need to succeed.

OnTrack accepts health insurance, whether it's private insurance or Medicaid or another type of insurance. Our staff is trained in assisting you with health insurance and will help you apply for the Oregon Health Plan if necessary.

What to expect

At your first OnTrack appointment, you'll meet with a counselor who will spend time getting to know you and assessing the scope of your addiction. Based on this assessment, the counselor will develop a treatment plan for you. This treatment plan will likely include individual and group counseling over a period of time that best fits your needs. You will have periodic urinalysis tests to ensure that you are not taking any illicit substances.

Depending on the nature and severity of your addiction, you might be referred to one of our residential treatment facilities so you can focus full-time on your recovery. This residential treatment period lasts 90-120 days in most cases, followed by outpatient counseling.

Making permanent changes

You'll need to be around clean and sober people who can support you in your recovery. Some friends, and maybe even family members, may still be active in their addiction, and that can prevent you from achieving your own recovery. Organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) have proven extraordinarily helpful for people in recovery looking for connection and the power of group goodwill and intention.

If you need to get away from where you are living, OnTrack has both transitional housing and more permanent housing options. This is clean, sober living either in a group house with like-minded people in recovery, or in individual apartments that are part of a sober community. Transitional housing usually lasts for six months while you get back on your feet, continue to go to counseling, re-establish yourself with a job and stable income, and restore a healthy equilibrium to your life.

Mental health care

There is a term in addiction recovery treatment and behavioral health called "dual diagnosis." It may also be called "co-occurring disorder." This is when a person is experiencing a mental health issue (e.g. anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder) along with an addiction problem.

It's common for people suffering from a mental health issue to seek relief through alcohol, drugs or another addiction. It's possible you will need help from both an addiction treatment counselor and a mental health professional to achieve a full recovery. Your OnTrack counselor can help connect you with a mental health counselor if you decide that is an important part of your path to recovery.

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)

If you have an addiction to opioids such as heroin or prescription pain relievers, you will hear the term "medication-assisted treatment," often abbreviated as "MAT". MAT is the use of medications, in combination with counseling, to help treat opioid addiction. The prescribed medication helps to relieve physical cravings for opioids and blocks the euphoric effects of alcohol and opioids, without the negative effects of the abused drug.

Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat opioid addiction, and for some people struggling with addiction, MAT can help sustain recovery. Your counselor can connect you with a MAT provider to decide if it's the right option for you.

The first step on your road to recovery is to pick up the phone or make an in-person visit to one of our offices in Jackson or Josephine Counties and schedule an assessment. Your road to recovery starts today!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

MEDFORD

(541) 772-1777
300 West Main St.
Medford,
OR 97501

GRANTS PASS

(541) 955-9227
720 NW 6th St.
Grants Pass,
OR 97526

CAVE JUNCTION

(541) 955-9227
535 E. River St.
Cave Junction,
OR 97523



Coming Home

Looking back over OnTrack’s fifty years of serving the Rogue Valley, there are many accomplishments to celebrate, and one of the most significant is the creation of the HOME Program.

Often referred to as the “Mom’s Program”, OnTrack’s HOME Program was created in 1989 to offer the highest quality research-based residential treatment to substance-abusing pregnant and parenting women with their children. For 30 years now, the HOME Program has provided safe shelter and addiction treatment services, allowing young women to deliver drug-free babies, create strong attachments with their children, and learn to raise their families in loving, clean and sober homes.

The HOME Program’s goal of keeping children out of the foster care system and allowing families to stay together during treatment was groundbreaking at the time the program first opened and served as a model for the development of similar programs nationwide. Involving family members in the recovery process increased the chances of sustained recovery and decreased the incidence of child abuse and neglect. No longer did these parents face the tortuous choice of receiving treatment vs. the care and custody of their children.

Nurturing hope, energy and change

Counselor Judi Willingham has been part of the HOME Program for 27 years and serves as the resident den mother to a constantly shifting group of clients and their young children. She knew from the beginning that the HOME Program was where she needed to practice her craft. “I have a profound knowledge that this is what I’m supposed to be doing,” she enthuses. “I’m surrounded by hope, energy and change.”

The HOME Program facility is a large one, with capacity for 27 adult females and 24 children, creating quite a bustling environment when all the beds are full, as they normally are (with an extensive waiting list). Over the years, thousands of women have graduated from the program, and Willingham sees evidence of their success in her travels around the region.

“It’s not uncommon for me to be in a store or restaurant and a woman will come up and say, ‘Do you remember me?’ and tell me of their ongoing sobriety or show me pictures of their kids,” says Willingham. “It’s very gratifying to hear how the HOME Program changed their lives.”

Acknowledging the disease

Judi firmly believes that addiction is a disease and should be treated as such. “Can we let go of the

shame, blame and guilt? Let's stop treating addicts like they are bad people, or less-than. They are sick, just like people with cancer or diabetes."

While all clients at OnTrack are encouraged to take part in AA or NA meetings if that supports their recovery, that is not part of Willingham's counseling methodology. "I take a multi-sensory approach," she explains. "We use poetry, art, film, movement and other modes to stimulate a sharing of feelings and learning self-expression. For many girls, it's the first time they have experienced and been moved by a poem or a film and found a way to relate it to their own lives."

Let's stop treating addicts like they are bad people, or less-than. They are sick, just like people with cancer or diabetes."

Trying to break the cycle

On a more sobering note, Willingham also sees the daughters of women who completed the program 15-20 years ago coming in the door pregnant, addicted and repeating the generational cycle of substance abuse and too-early parenthood. Relentless poverty and a lack of education and positive role models are still potent foes in stemming the tide of addiction in our community.

There's also no guarantee that the first time will be the charm for clients entering the HOME Program. "Not everybody gets it the first time," says Willingham. "Coming through three times is not unusual. They just haven't got it yet." As evidenced by an estimated 40-60% relapse rate for substance abuse sufferers, no one can predict when the time will be right for the message to sink in, and real change can begin.

Willingham is not in recovery from substance abuse herself, but freely admits to a past co-dependence addiction. As she succinctly puts it, "I never had a problem with substance abuse, but I sure knew how to find men who did!" With those days behind her, Judi now finds the company of family and friends, supplemented with frequent outings to the theatre with friends, to be quite enough to keep her busy.

For more information about the HOME Program, please call (541) 772-4648.

Holly's Story

"The Mom's Program saved my life."

That's Holly Smyth talking, echoing the sentiments of so many young women who have found sobriety, a lasting recovery, and a healthy relationship with their child after completing residential treatment at OnTrack's HOME (Mom's) Program.

Holly, 33, had been battling addiction since she was 16 years old, when the suicide of her father deepened an already active drug problem. She experienced homelessness, abusive relationships and a hopeless, chaotic life throughout her 20s and early 30s, giving birth to six children who either had to be given up for adoption or put into the foster care system.

Desperate for help, Holly decided to try a recovery program one more time. "I drove myself to the OnTrack parking lot and waited for five hours until someone could see me," she recalls. Being a new mother and actively addicted, Holly was immediately admitted to the HOME Program, where she stayed from December 2018 to April 2019.

"The program taught me so much," says Holly. "I finally learned how to grieve the loss of my Dad. I found hope. I learned how to resist the fight-or-flight mode I had been in for so long." Holly's youngest child Elijah was returned to her by the Department of Human Services (DHS) six weeks into her stay at the HOME program, and they've been together ever since.

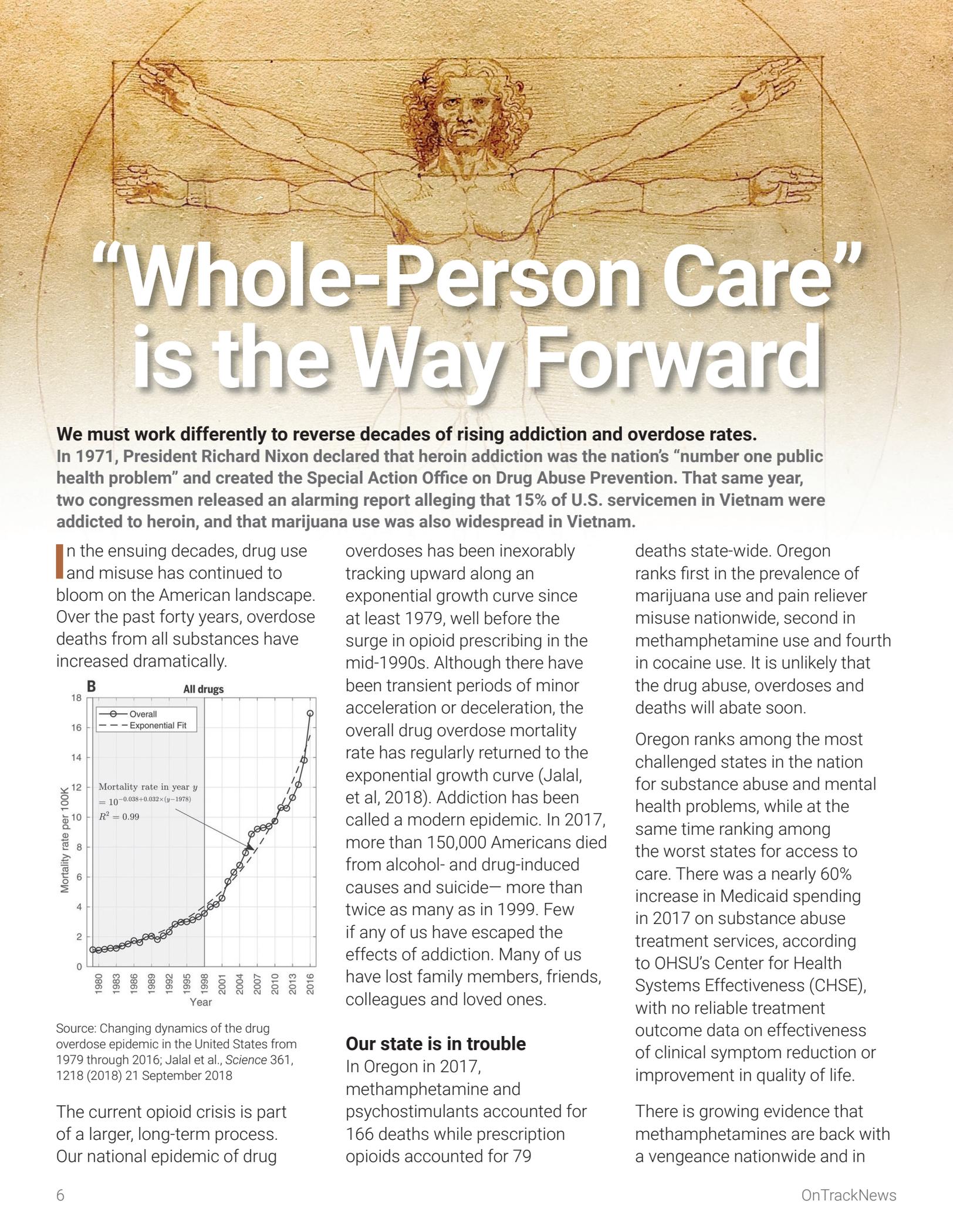
Holly now has a full-time job and a place to call home for she and Elijah. "I have everything I need," she enthuses, "and I'm amazed at everything I can accomplish in one day."

At the time of this interview, Holly was a proud 309 days sober and feeling very optimistic about her life. Her son Elijah bounced, smiled and cooed his way through the interview. By continuing to show progress in her recovery, she has been able to reconnect with her four other sons and is working with DHS on reconnecting with her daughter.

Having recently obtained her GED, Holly starts classes at Rogue Community College in January and hopes to get her degree in human services and eventually work with teens in crisis.



Holly and Elijah.

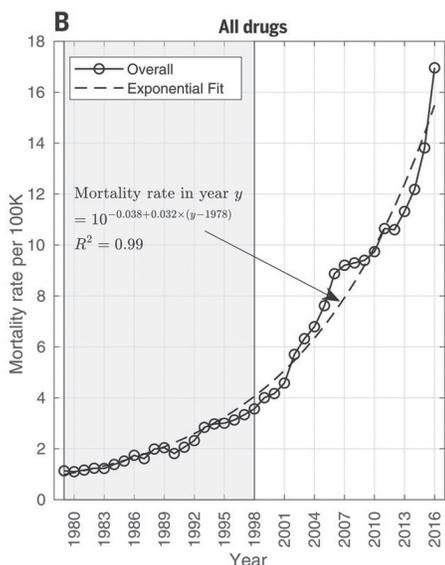


“Whole-Person Care” is the Way Forward

We must work differently to reverse decades of rising addiction and overdose rates.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon declared that heroin addiction was the nation’s “number one public health problem” and created the Special Action Office on Drug Abuse Prevention. That same year, two congressmen released an alarming report alleging that 15% of U.S. servicemen in Vietnam were addicted to heroin, and that marijuana use was also widespread in Vietnam.

In the ensuing decades, drug use and misuse has continued to bloom on the American landscape. Over the past forty years, overdose deaths from all substances have increased dramatically.



Source: Changing dynamics of the drug overdose epidemic in the United States from 1979 through 2016; Jalal et al., *Science* 361, 1218 (2018) 21 September 2018

The current opioid crisis is part of a larger, long-term process. Our national epidemic of drug

overdoses has been inexorably tracking upward along an exponential growth curve since at least 1979, well before the surge in opioid prescribing in the mid-1990s. Although there have been transient periods of minor acceleration or deceleration, the overall drug overdose mortality rate has regularly returned to the exponential growth curve (Jalal, et al, 2018). Addiction has been called a modern epidemic. In 2017, more than 150,000 Americans died from alcohol- and drug-induced causes and suicide— more than twice as many as in 1999. Few if any of us have escaped the effects of addiction. Many of us have lost family members, friends, colleagues and loved ones.

Our state is in trouble

In Oregon in 2017, methamphetamine and psychostimulants accounted for 166 deaths while prescription opioids accounted for 79

deaths state-wide. Oregon ranks first in the prevalence of marijuana use and pain reliever misuse nationwide, second in methamphetamine use and fourth in cocaine use. It is unlikely that the drug abuse, overdoses and deaths will abate soon.

Oregon ranks among the most challenged states in the nation for substance abuse and mental health problems, while at the same time ranking among the worst states for access to care. There was a nearly 60% increase in Medicaid spending in 2017 on substance abuse treatment services, according to OHSU’s Center for Health Systems Effectiveness (CHSE), with no reliable treatment outcome data on effectiveness of clinical symptom reduction or improvement in quality of life.

There is growing evidence that methamphetamines are back with a vengeance nationwide and in

Oregon, due to the intense focus on curbing opioid abuse. The way in which some specific drugs have waxed and waned in popularity makes predictions about the future role of specific drugs far more uncertain. Indeed, it is possible that in the future, the drug overdose epidemic may be driven by a new or heretofore obscure psychoactive substance.

Understanding the social and psychological forces that are holding these multiple sub-epidemics together and fueling the dramatic upward trajectory of overdose deaths may be important in revealing the root causes of this “modern epidemic” of addiction. This understanding may be crucial to implementation of prevention and intervention strategies.

Push and pull factors at work

Economic and technological “push” factors may be at work to increase a drug’s supply, such as improved communications and supply chains, efficiencies in drug manufacturing, and expanding drug markets, leading to lower prices and higher drug purities. Sociological and psychological “pull” forces may be operating to accelerate demand, such as despair, loss of purpose, and dissolution of communities. Elucidation of the dynamics of the “deep” drivers of the overdose epidemic may provide valuable new insights. (Jalal, et al, 2018)

Addiction is a complex condition involving genetics, environment, life experience, the drug itself, and brain mechanisms. Multiple risk factors include early aggressive behavior, poor social skills, lack of parental supervision, substance use, drug availability and poverty in individual, family, peer, school and community domains. A lack of protective factors such as self-control, positive relationships, parental monitoring and support, academic competence, anti-drug policies and strong neighborhood attachment can also influence the development of an addiction.

In order to effectively address addiction, we need to focus on a “whole-person” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders including non-pharmacological treatment for pain, as well as ensuring that people have the employment, education and housing supports they need for long-term recovery.

American Psychological Association CEO Arthur C. Evans Jr., PhD, said in a prepared statement to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform:

“The three forms of treatment with the strongest evidence base for use in treating opioid use disorders are contingency management (motivational therapy), cognitive behavioral therapy and multi-dimensional family therapy.”

Research shows that the most effective treatment of opioid use disorder requires psychosocial interventions in combination with medications. However, it is important to remember that the term ‘medication-assisted treatment’ means that **the use of medications is assisting in treatment.**”

Research shows that the most effective treatment of opioid use disorder requires psychosocial interventions in combination with medications.

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of FDA-approved medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to treating substance abuse disorders. At OnTrack, we provide the supportive counseling and partner with community providers who administer the medications such as buprenorphine and suboxone.

OnTrack is an agency dedicated to treating the whole person. In addition to intensive counseling for our clients’ substance abuse disorders, we offer the support of peer specialists who have lived experience with addiction; we also offer life skills training, supportive housing, parenting classes, and family counseling. Without these additional supportive services, we believe the probability of relapse is much higher.

In addition to offering outpatient and residential treatment programs for addiction and substance abuse, we also offer a Domestic Abuse Alternatives Program (DAAP), a Teens Program, DUII-mandated counseling, anger management counseling and family counseling. OnTrack is also committed to providing transitional, low-income and second chance housing opportunities throughout the Rogue Valley.

Thanks to OnTrack
for making
Southern Oregon
even better.



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