

GRAND ROUNDS

Renfrew County Addiction Treatment Services (ATS) is expanding its team to now offer specialized care and counselling for a new opioid community treatment program.

ATS, which is sponsored by RVH, currently provides county-wide assistance to individuals 12 years or older who are experiencing problems with alcohol, drugs or gambling.

Kim MacLeod, Director of ATS, says in the past five years or so they have seen a steady increase in individuals presenting with addictions to synthetic narcotics like oxycontin, and prescription medications like morphine and codeine. These types of highly addictive drugs are all categorized as opioids.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, between 1991 and 2009, prescriptions for oxycodone-containing products in the province rose by an astounding 900 per cent.

The Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) recently approved funding to support investments in opioid community treatment services across Renfrew County.

“ATS is very pleased to have received funding from the LHIN to hire a full-time Opioid Community Case Manager. In hiring Janice Poirier for the position, we are fortunate to have someone with such a wealth of knowledge and experience to lead this initiative,” comments MacLeod. It is only a few weeks into the program and Poirier is already working with clients.

“The opioid treatment program is a wonderful addition to the range of services offered by our ATS staff,” says Julia Boudreau, RVH Vice-President of Corporate Services, “We welcome Janice to the team.”

Poirier is no stranger to the professionals at ATS and joins the team with an extensive background in helping people navigate addiction treatment at the Royal Ottawa Hospital, where she held an outreach position within Renfrew County and she is currently working with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health providing education and workshops with the Opiate Initiative.

Since this is a new program, Poirier has been responsible for the organization and development of the service. She looks

forward to liaising with other community agencies across the county to provide easy access to treatment solutions for individuals.

“The most important thing with this program is easy access—we need to meet these individuals in their own community,” Poirier points out, which means she will be available at ATS office locations in Deep River, Pembroke, Eganville, Arnprior, Barry’s Bay and in Renfrew.

Plans are also underway to introduce the program to the Pikwakanagan Golden Lake community.

She says it is high-priority for her to alleviate many of the risks associated with opioid addictions. “We need to make sure that travel is not a barrier for treatment.”

The program itself is very holistic in nature explains Poirier, and will focus on client-centred care and use a harm reduction approach to treatment. She says each client will go through an assessment process and together they will develop an individualized treatment plan.

A major component to their care is the counselling, she adds. “It’s a welcoming and non-judgemental environment,” where together, they work through any underlying issues related to the addiction. “I’m here to see the client through the entire process.”

Clients also benefit from the strong working partnerships between ATS and the Royal Ottawa Hospital’s Early Intervention Opioid Outpatient Clinic.

To make an appointment with Janice or to inquire about support for other addiction treatment services offered, please contact the main office in Renfrew at 613-432-9855 or 1-800-265-0197.



Addiction Treatment Services introduces Janice Poirier, Case Manager of the new Opioid Community Treatment Program.