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Western Sierra Medical Clinic substance abuse treatment program expands

Prescription pain medications, heroin focus of program

Western Sierra Medical Clinic has added specially trained health care professionals to its newly established medication-assisted treatment program.

Western Sierra's MAT program helps residents addicted to drugs, especially those battling opioids such as prescription pain medications and heroin.

Prescription pain medication abuse is a critical issue for Nevada County, which had the fifth-highest rate of non-fatal emergency room visits related to opioids in the state, according to the latest figures from the California Department of Public Health. Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital in Grass Valley has reported an 80 percent increase in opioid-related cases during the past few years.

"The purpose of the medication-assisted treatment program is to curb the escalation of opioid abuse and opioid-related deaths, especially in rural areas like Nevada, Sierra and Placer counties," said Western Sierra CEO Scott McFarland. "The opioid epidemic has a far-reaching effect on our community, from crime and health care to families and employers. We're committed to addressing the issue and helping as many residents combat substance abuse as possible."

The medication-assisted treatment program will be available to those dealing with an addiction to heroin or prescription pain medications such as Vicodin, OxyContin and Percocet. Community members with health insurance to those who depend on government programs to teenagers and young adults are eligible for the program. The MAT program is an effective and safe way to reduce the frequency and quantity of opioid use.

"At Western Sierra, we take our mission to combat substance abuse very seriously. said Dr. Christina Lasich, Director of the Medication Assisted Treatment Program for Western Sierra. "We are working towards improved access to care for those who want help with opioid use disorder. We also have many programs that will help prevent opioid-overdose deaths."

Those interested in applying for or learning more about the MAT program can call Western Sierra Medical Clinic at 530-274-9762 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or a 24/7 hotline at 855-HOPE-4-YOU.