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Chemical dependency, mental health service being integrated, Clallam commissioners told

By Rob Ollikainen

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PORT ANGELES — Chemical dependency and mental health treatment are being integrated because many in Clallam County struggle with both, Human Services Planner Judith Anderson told county commissioners this week.

Clallam County commissioners Tuesday declared September recovery month in recognition of those who struggle with both issues.

The theme for this year's national event — visible, vocal and valuable — “invites each of us to join the recovery community in supporting quality treatment programs and reducing the stigma that discourages many people from ever seeking treatment,” according to the proclamation commissioners signed.

Anderson said heroin use is up across the nation.

“As we look across the community and the nation, there is something of a dismal picture, particularly with the heroin epidemic that's in evidence everywhere,” Anderson told commissioners.

“Also, here in our community, we have some ongoing challenges for those in early recovery, particularly around employment opportunities for them and safe and sober housing across the community.”

But the news isn't all bleak.

Life-saver

Several lives have been saved because of naloxone, a heroin overdose antidote that many law enforcement officers now carry, Anderson said.

Clallam County Health and Human Services' public health section continues to distribute clean syringes through a needle exchange program.

“The community is increasingly engaged in understanding and addressing substance abuse issues,” Anderson said.

Peninsula Behavioral Health recently sponsored a compassion rally and suicide prevention march.

“We had an overdose awareness march also, and just last weekend a recovery and remembrance walk to honor those in recovery as well of those who lost their lives to

addiction,” Anderson said.

Local funding

Local funding for the Homelessness Task Force and Chemical Dependency/Mental Health Program Fund has helped meet community needs and filled funding gaps, Anderson said.

Board Chairman Jim McEntire said it is “very welcome news that the community is engaging on this very difficult and troublesome issue.”

“I appreciate the ones in the community that have gotten together and formed some organizations and highlighted the issues and the problems that we see,” he said.

“That’s a good thing.”

If you are concerned about your own or a loved one’s substance abuse, whether it’s alcohol, prescription medication, marijuana or street drugs, help is available.

Here’s a list of state-certified treatment programs that can provide an initial chemical dependency assessment to determine the level of care that is needed:

- Specialty Services II, 825 E. Fifth St., Port Angeles, 360-477-4790.
- Cedar Grove Port Angeles, 221 N. Race St., 360-452-2443.
- Cedar Grove Forks, 494 S. Forks Ave., 360-374-5109.
- Jamestown S’Klallam Chemical Dependency Center, 1033 Old Blyn Highway, 360-681-4625.
- Klallam Counseling Services, 933 E. First St., Port Angeles, 360-452-4432.
- Makah Recovery Services, 100 Wellness Way, Neah Bay, 360-645-2461.
- Olympic Personal Growth Center, 390 Cedar St., Sequim, 360-681-8463.

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