

## **LEE COUNTY: SAFE STATION, A COLLOBARATIVE RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID CRISIS**

*Lee County Human and Veteran Services, Lee County Public Safety, SalusCare, Coalition for a Drug Free Southwest Florida, The Office of the State Attorney, The Office of the Public Defender, Cape Coral Police Department and The United Way of Lee County.*

The Safe Station concept, initially developed by the Manchester, N.H. Fire Department, is a program for those seeking treatment for a substance use disorder at any time of day or night when a person decides he or she wants help. In Lee County, this voluntary model would take advantage of Lee County's Public Safety network of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire Districts and other public safety facilities located throughout the community. These stations are generally located in neighborhoods and would be easily identified by Safe Station signage and readily accessible whenever a person is ready to seek treatment. Following initiation of the Safe Station program in Manchester, NH, overdoses and deaths from overdoses decreased. Approximately 70% of the program's 1,300 participants finished the treatment program. The Safe Station concept can and will cut into the current opioid crisis in Lee County.

### **Enrollment**

The participant will present in need at a Safe Station and undergoes a basic medical exam, including vital signs. Stable participants will be transported by taxi to SalusCare Detox, the local treatment facility, for additional screening and placement into a detoxification or substance abuse treatment program as deemed appropriate. The entire process from arrival at the Safe Station to leaving for treatment will be less than 30 minutes. If immediate medical attention is necessary, the participant will be transported to a local hospital by EMS. The hospital personnel will highlight the patient's record as a Safe Station participant to ensure they will be offered entry into the program once their treatment is complete. Once medically cleared at the hospital, the participant will be transported by taxi to SalusCare for additional screening and placement into a treatment program deemed appropriate by the screening team. If a participant enrolled in Safe Station is seeking treatment with a pending criminal charge as a result of their addiction, they may have the charge(s) dropped depending on the severity of the charge(s) by the Office of the State Attorney. The patient has the ability to leave the program at any time as this is a voluntary program.

Because the staffing resources are already in place at these locations, there will be no additional staffing costs associated with recruiting participating EMS and/or Fire Districts. Responding to the needs of Safe Station participants will translate to potential lost time responding to other emergencies during the screening process. This time, for an average of one request per day, equals 182.5 lost unit hours annually.

Metal boxes for securing the participant's belongings will be required at each Safe Station and signage promoting the participation of the designated fire station will be easily identifiable.

## **Detoxification**

Based on the outcome of the screening and intake team at SalusCare, the individual will be put on a medical protocol dependent on their need. Individuals will receive medications, group therapy, individual discharge planning, activities to support recovery, and linkage to a continuum of care, including the wrap around treatment team. With the concept of utilizing the Safe Station model, SalusCare would designate four (4) beds to Safe Station participants if funded.

SalusCare will collect fees from patients and insurances as available.

## **Community-Based Wrap-Around Treatment Team**

Once an individual completes their detoxification regimen, the goal would be to admit them to a community-based wrap around treatment team. This team would be comprised of a case manager, clinician, nurse, and a peer providing community based treatment. With the support of a manager, support specialist, incidental funding, and allocated doctor time, the team will be able to provide a variety of services that are not currently available in our community in one compact team. Often engagement and follow up is a component missing with individuals who suffer from addiction in our community. The importance of this program is that the team will go out to the community where the individual is located.

A case manager would help to identify a patient's goals, needs and resources and formulate a plan with the participant to meet those goals.

A clinician would do individual therapy utilizing evidence based practices to work with the patient on recovery and developing the necessary coping skills to live a successful and functional life in the community without the use of substances.

A nurse would assist with ensuring a collaboration of behavioral health and primary care to assist the patient in having a holistic approach to their healthcare. Additionally, if the patient is on any type of medications, the nurse can assist with medication education and medication compliance.

A peer specialist would provide an invaluable service to individuals in this program by having the ability to relate and walk the patient through the recovery process---like they themselves, have done. Peer specialists offer a unique perspective and ability to interact with individuals that may not otherwise accomplished by other team members.

## **Public Awareness, Community Education and Marketing Plan**

Upon commencing the Safe Station program, an awareness and outreach campaign will be implemented to educate the public on the opiate crisis and the availability of these Safe Stations in Lee County. The campaign will utilize social media and the Public Information Officers employed by the partnering agencies. In addition, an educational campaign on Safe Stations will be presented to local after-school programs and other outreach providers located in the Lee County School District, in partnership with the Coalition for a Drug Free Southwest Florida. Prevention and education programs will help provide immediate services to children who are exposed to opiate-related trauma incidents.

## **Community Engagement**

Additional outreach will include education and a “street-outreach team” referred to as the Community Opioid Outreach Program (COOP) to engage those battling opioid addiction that have not gained the confidence or awareness to present at an established Safe Station location by utilizing an alert system based on data entry for local calls for service due to an overdose. The system aggregates and tracks calls, monitors and alerts surges in overdoses, and geographically highlights overdose locations. COOP will have a direct line to in-patient and out-patient treatment and will have the ability to get people introduced to the services they need by expediting the admissions process, and by maintaining contact throughout the recovery process, COOP can provide patient support and ensure successful rehabilitation.