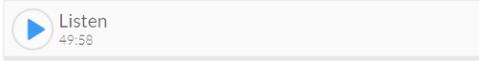


CoastLine: Opioid Treatment Options - Abstinence Vs. Medically-Assisted Therapy



[Listen to CoastLine here.](#)

While the opioid crisis continues to plague the Cape Fear region and the state, there are signs that recent initiatives are helping.

Opioid overdose visits to the New Hanover Regional Medical Center Emergency Department dropped by more than half through 10 months of 2018. As NHRMC Spokesman Julian March puts it, that's "encouraging news for a community two years ago cited by a national study as home of the nation's worst opioid problem."

March attributes the drop, in part, to a nearly 20% cut in prescriptions for opioids.

District Attorney Ben David recently told the StarNews he's also seeing a decrease in the number of heroin cases over the last year.

More people are seeking treatment due to an effort to funnel people struggling with addiction into treatment rather than jail.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, science supports the use of medications like methadone, naltrexone, and buprenorphine for opioid use disorder. But federal health officials also acknowledge some people do stop using on their own or through support groups.

Tides, Inc. is a non-profit funded by New Hanover County that treats pregnant women or women who are new mothers and are dependent on opioids. All of its patients are on medically assisted therapies. Since Tides opened last September, officials there say there are no cases of patients losing their children to non-family members in foster care.

A proposed treatment facility in New Hanover County called The Healing Place will offer people dependent on drugs and alcohol a support system through a long-term, 12-step program. The project, however, is controversial.

A City of Wilmington meeting on January 8th lasted over seven hours, with council and members of the community questioning the security and the services of the planned facility, The Healing Place. But the model it's based on shows a high rate of success. According to Trillium Health Resources, the program has a 66% recovery rate one year after beginning the program.

With us to explore emerging treatment options:

Cindy Ehlers, Executive Vice President of Clinical Operations for [Trillium Health Resources](#) and licensed professional counselor

Dr. William Johnstone, Faculty Physician, OB / GYN Residency Program, New Hanover Regional Medical Center; Founder, Tides, Inc.



