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Good morning

My name is Amanda Cope. I am a Registered Nurse, member and Chief Operating Officer with Positive Recovery Solutions LLC. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk about our innovative program that specializes in bringing the medication Vivitrol to fragile patient populations via a mobile unit.

In November of 2013, PRS opened its doors to begin medication assisted treatment for the suffering addict. We began a maintenance program utilizing the partial agonist medication suboxone. Though our program practices and policies were created to ensure compliance and reduce the risk of diversion and continued use of illicit substances, we found that our success rate was minimal. We continued to see substance abuse, diversion, and a patient population that was unwilling to adhere to a taper schedule. With those concerns in mind we decided to end our use of buprenorphine with our patient population effective 3/31/16.

During our medical management of suboxone patients we learned about the medication Vivitrol and the complete abstinence model it supports. We immediately incorporated it into our program. We enthusiastically marketed this medication as a new and improved way to truly help the addict and alcoholic break the chains of active addiction. Our feedback from patients on Vivitrol and the success they were achieving was a huge revelation for us. We have always had the focus and determination to give our patients the best possible chance for a successful road to recovery.

During our trial of Vivitrol we became aware of a huge roadblock for patients. There were few to no providers willing to follow this population. Reasons included but not limited to: lack of education of medical professionals on what the medication is and how it works, stigma surrounding this specific patient population and most concerning of all is an unwillingness of some medical entities to essentially allow their patients the freedom of not being handcuffed to a medication. They are simply not interested in potentially losing a guaranteed patient by using a non-controlled, non-addictive medication. We had patients traveling up to 4 hours to our brick and mortar location to receive their follow up injection. Realizing that the success of recovery with Vivitrol depends on having access to the medication, we created a pilot program that utilized a mobile unit.

In the early stages of developing our program we reached out to local county SCA's to see if their communities could benefit from our program. The feedback we received was an emphatic YES. Counties were not only receptive to our program but in fact desperate to have the ability to address the growing heroin epidemic we face in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During the initial marketing of our mobile unit 37 of the 67 counties applied for grant funding that included our program.

In July of 2015 our unit went live in the 3 counties of Blair, Armstrong, and Indiana. I would like to mention that it was the forward thinking and progressive mind set of Judy Rosser (Blair county) and Kami Anderson (Armstrong, Indiana, Clarion counties) that propelled this program forward. These ladies saw an opportunity to battle this horrific epidemic outside of the methods that continue to produce limited successful results. I would be remiss not to clarify that PRS believes that there are patients who not only benefit from other medications like suboxone and methadone but also enjoy successful recovery. We can only base our opinion on the limited success we have experienced with buprenorphine.



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Since March of this year PRS has contracted with an additional 21 counties. We are in varying stages of going live in each. We have helped facilitate the startup of 3 county jail programs and are currently in progress of several more. We have received the green light from Secretary Wetzel to contract with the Department of Corrections to begin projects in multiple SCI's. We work closely with adult probation and parole, multiple behavioral entities, inpatient and outpatient rehab programs. We have reentry programs upcoming with Governor Hogan in Maryland state and projects starting in Florida. We have applied for the program "pay for success" and have also applied to create 5 brick and mortar locations in each district under the "Centers of Excellence" program. We believe that the Centers of Excellence project is desperately needed and look forward to participating.

PRS begins services on the mobile unit on a biweekly basis. We receive referrals from SCA staff, local behavioral health entities, probation and parole and individuals who find our services on the Vivitrol provider locator. Once we received a demographic form our staff reaches out to the patient and schedules their appointment date and time. Patients are urine drug screened at each appointment. Patients who have not yet been induced on the medication will receive a script for the "naltrexone challenge test" or medications that are non-controlled to help with the discomfort of withdrawal if they still have a dependency developed. Patients are then followed on a monthly basis thereafter. PRS gives a letter to each patient during initial consultation that they are to present to their D & A counselor. This letter identifies us as their provider for Vivitrol and in return asks that they fax us monthly verification of the patient's compliance with counseling. PRS knows that medication alone is not the answer. Our patients must be willing to do the work of recovery outside of the Vivitrol injection. Our consents that are presented to the patient at their first visit are designed so that we can openly collaborate with all entities involved with the patients care.

Thus far we have had not only a rapidly expanding patient population but have also been able to witness and play a part in multiple success stories. Vivitrol can in fact bring back together families, loved ones and communities. We are very blessed and grateful to help fight this overwhelming epidemic and look forward to expanding our project throughout the entire Commonwealth. We thank you for the opportunity to tell you about our project and look forward to many more success stories to come.