MEDICATION ASSISTED THERAPY (MAT) FOR OPIATE ADDICTED PERSONS AT PUBLIC HEALTH IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Department of Health
Dr. Eugene Marciniak, Region 5 Health Officer
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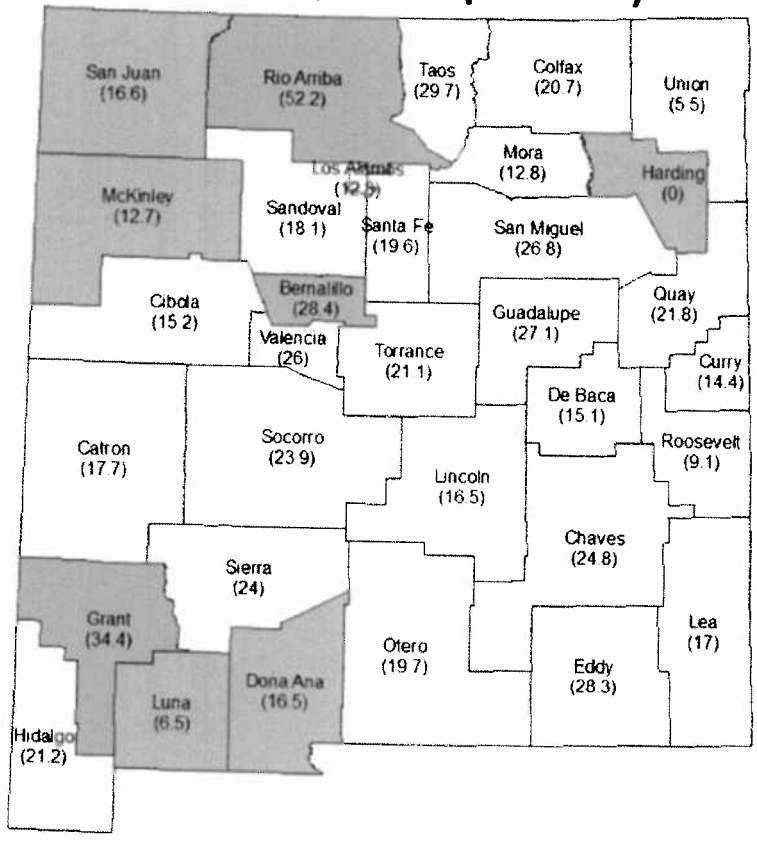
Opioid Abuse in New Mexico

Example: Rio Arriba Grade 9-12 Students (BRFSS 2009)

- 19.4% had used painkillers to get high in past 30 days
- 6.5% had used heroin in past 30 days
- 7.0% had used heroin in past

2007-2009 Drug-Induced Deaths in NM
(per 100,000 Population)



National Average: 12.7/100,000

New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System (NM-IBIS), http://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/DrugIndDth.Cnty.html, 04/28/11

Another heroin casualty

By Olivier Uyttebrouck / Albuquerque Journal Staff Writer on Tue, Aug 16, 2011

Jennifer Weiss has campaigned passionately to raise public awareness about an epidemic of heroin abuse among New Mexico teens. This weekend she lost a personal battle to save her own son, who died Saturday of an apparent overdose.

Treatment

- Tools are available to offer evidence-based, effective, comprehensive, humane treatment and services for people who are addicted to heroin and other opiates.
- Incarcerated populations can be offered MAT for detox, stabilized during incarceration, and given referral for continuation of Rx after release

Philosophy

- Addiction is a brain disease
- Continuum of public health harm reduction services
- No "wrong door" to treatment
- Behavioral health issues need to be addressed

Background

- **October 2005 to October 2007**: Region 5 Public Health served as Central Intake Unit for the Access to Recovery Project in southern NM
- **2007**: Region 5 Public Health Opiate Replacement Therapy (ORT) Program launched
- **2008 Region 3 (Albuquerque):** launched services for persons recently released from MDC
- **2009:** Las Cruces' only methadone clinic closed its doors
- **To Date:** Region 5 staff participate in weekly Integrated Addiction /Psychiatry (Telehealth) Clinics coordinated by UNM's Project ECHO
- **FY12:** Region 5 filed application to participate in Access to Recovery Project as provider in southern NM

Harm Reduction Program with Suboxone

Goals: Comprehensive harm reduction services

- Syringe exchange
- Overdose prevention with Narcan
- Suboxone:
- Increase access to addiction services for persons with opiate dependency, especially with heroin & prescription painkillers and among persons recently released from jail or prison

Serves: Over 200 clients/month at two Public Health Offices

Provides: *medication assisted treatment, laboratory baseline/ monitoring *behavioral counseling/therapy, 12-step programs, SMART Recovery meetings and supportive services by referral

Cost/Benefit: Cost of Suboxone: $10,920 per client per year vs $30,000 cost of incarceration per inmate per year

Region 3 Suboxone Patient Profile – First 200 Patients

- 20% referred by MDC
- Total client visits – 681
- 64% Male
- 57% Hispanic
- 66% hepatitis C positive
- No HIV positive
- Average injections/week
  - before Suboxone – 25
  - after Rx – 0.6
- Vaccinations provided – Hep A, B and Pneumococcal

Region 5 Suboxone Patient Profile

- Average monthly caseload is 170-190 persons
  - 200-250 clinic/office/class visits per month
- Drug use behavior
  - 50% report injection behavior
  - 50% report prescription pain medication
- 90% are at or below the federal poverty level
- 60% have public or private insurance
- 50% have been in the program for more than 6 months
- Where are they from:
  - 80% from Las Cruces and greater Doña Ana County

Two Public Health Approaches

Region 3

- Targets services to persons released from jail
- Induction and stabilization with transfer to community primary care provider
- Refers to county-based case managers and community based group therapy options
- Care & treatment for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and HIV/AIDS, screening and vaccination
- Weekly educational sessions at MDC, including enrollment and initial 4-tablet prescription for eligible detainees

Region 5

- Targets persons recently released from jail or prison (community re-entry)
- Sustained services
- Behavioral health addiction counseling provided to patients on site
- Care & treatment for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and HIV/AIDS, screening and vaccination
- Weekly introductory class on opiate replacement therapy at the Las Cruces health office, open to the public

Patient Financial Assistance

- Help for application to Medicaid, State Coverage Insurance (SCI) or pharmaceutical company medication assistance programs provided to indigent persons

- Limited funding in FY12 to provide short term subsidy for Suboxone

Traditional Public Health Programs, Harm Reduction and Prescription for Addiction

- Why does Public Health Link Traditional Public Health Programs, Harm Reduction and Prescription for Addiction?
- Allows us to address complex and seemingly intractable and interconnected public health issues- HIV, STDs, Hepatitis B and C, opiate addiction, overdose deaths, the health impact of mass incarceration

Challenges

- Providers:
  - Suboxone prescription limited to certified MDs
  - Limits on patient caseload (30 in first year, 100 following years)
  - Limited number of certified physicians statewide
  - Limited or nonexistent resources in rural and remote communities
- Limited in-patient facilities
- Insurance coverage
  - High levels of un/underinsurance
  - State Coverage Insurance (SCI) currently closed to enrollment
  - Prior Authorization requirements
- Increasing prescription pain med abuse among young adults and teens

Potential

- Medicaid policy for billing for Suboxone treatment
- Suboxone Pharmaceutical patent has expired, possibly cheaper generic drug formulations coming
- Collaboration of Public Health and Public Safety in county detention facilities, prisons, and probation/parole offices
- Possible use of telehealth video conference infrastructure to support direct behavioral health counseling services,
- Innovative integration options- for substance use disorders, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, STDs and TB

- For More Information:
- Website http://www.healthynm.org/; see **Southwest Pathways** and **QuickLinks**
- Point of Contact for the Southwest Pathways Program in Public Health Region 5 is Patrick Stafford at: 575-528-6008 ***