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DRUG COURT DISCUSSION: Members of the Pulaski County Drug Court Team evaluate the progress of program participants at their December 18 meeting. Pictured are (from left) the Honorable Marcus H. Long, Jr., Probation Officer Dana Manns, and NRVCS' Lori Trail, Coordinator of the Drug Court Program. (Photo - Mike Wade/NRVCS)

Drug court program launched in Pulaski County

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PULASKI - Officials in Pulaski County have developed a new strategy to help address their community's well-documented struggles with substance abuse.

The Pulaski County Adult Drug Treatment Court Program, which accepted its first participant in December, is designed as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders with substance abuse-related charges. Spearheaded by the Honorable Marcus H. Long, Jr., 27th Circuit Court Judge, the Pulaski County program is the result of a collaborative effort between court officials, probation and law enforcement agencies, and NRVCS.

Offenders must voluntarily agree to participate in the Drug Court and are required to engage in substance abuse treatment while being subjected to intensive judicial

“Ultimately, our goal is to break the cycle of addiction, crime and incarceration in Pulaski County.”

*- Lori Trail
Drug Court Program Coordinator*

supervision and frequent drug testing.

Before a participant can graduate from the program, they must also perform community service, pay a portion of the program's cost, and either be employed or pursuing educational goals.

“Ultimately, our goal is to break the cycle of addiction, crime and incarceration in Pulaski County,” noted Drug Court Program Coordinator Lori Trail, an employee of NRVCS. “You really have to give credit to Judge Long...He's pushed hard for Pu-

laski County to get this program because he routinely sees the devastating impact that addiction has on the lives of those who go before him in the courtroom.”

Trail also pointed to data from the state medical examiner's office that shows Pulaski County ranks first among all other New River Valley localities in drug-related deaths from 2007 to 2010. In fact, Pulaski County's death rate from overdoses of prescription drugs was 20.2% in 2011, compared to the statewide rate of 4.6% that same year.

“There are so many areas in which this community has been negatively affected by substance abuse,” explained Trail. “We've seen an increase in the number of kids placed in foster care, our child abuse and neglect case numbers are higher than the statewide rate, and we consistently have a high unemployment rate,”

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NRVCS RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI) REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2014 (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014)

NRVCS (New River Valley Community Services) is the public provider of behavioral health services to residents of Virginia's New River Valley. These services include an array of programs and treatment options for individuals living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and/or substance use disorders.

9,131
New River Valley residents served by NRVCS during FY2014 (unduplicated number)

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Revenues by Source

State Funds (23%)	\$9,743,429
Federal Funds (3%)	\$1,169,985
Local Funds (1%)	\$519,090
Fee Revenue (66%)	\$28,200,319
Other Funds (7%)	\$2,901,447
Total Revenues (100%)	\$42,534,270

Expenses

Personnel	\$30,539,589
Operations	\$11,000,218
Total Expenses	\$41,539,807

Operating Income (Loss)	\$994,463
Less Restricted/Carryover	\$601,995

Net Surplus	\$392,468
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COMMUNITY OUTCOMES & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The individual value of NRVCS services can be defined in terms of improvements in the health, wellness, recovery, productivity, and independence of the individuals we serve. This value accrues to the community in the form of increased productivity in school and work, reduced community costs for other services, and enhanced quality of life. Some of those outcomes, along with program highlights, are listed below:

- NRVCS serves approximately 350 adults and children with **Intellectual Disability (ID) Case Management** services, 220 of which have an ID Waiver slot (167 adults, 53 children). Ninety-five percent of these individuals have maintained housing stability. Four individuals successfully transitioned to the community from the Southwest Virginia Training Center in 2014.
- NRVCS **school-based counselors** are currently available to all but two public schools in the New River Valley. We are also serving youth from all five localities at our **Claremont** program.
- Our **Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT)** program has expanded to three teams and now serves more than 200 residents in the NRV. We continue to see a reduction in both hospitalizations and arrests.
- NRVCS has increased collaboration with the Pulaski Free Clinic to provide behavioral health care services to their patients with significant mental health conditions; as well as a more **integrative care model** where NRVCS clients with significant medical conditions without insurance can be prioritized with the Free Clinic.
- NRVCS has implemented a new model for **outpatient services** that offers individuals an appointment within 7-14 days. This new model has eliminated a waiting list for outpatient services and increased our ability to appropriately link individuals to necessary services.
- For the first time, NRVCS now has a **child/adolescent psychiatrist** serving youth in its Floyd Clinic.
- A **full-time substance abuse (SA) clinician** has joined the staff at the NRVCS Pulaski Clinic to work with Drug Court clients, complete SA assessments, and increase access to care for the SA population. A long-term goal is to create an intensive outpatient SA program at the Pulaski Clinic, similar to Stepping Stones.
- The **NRVCS Integrated Healthcare Program**, in collaboration with the Mount Rogers CSB and University of Virginia Child and Family Psychiatry Clinic, has successfully utilized the Telepsych portal to provide psychiatric services to three individuals.
- **Fairview Home** housed an average of 56 residents. Six residents were able to move back out to their own apartments or with their families, due in part to such significant improvements in their health after residing at Fairview Home.
- NRVCS is currently serving 215 **at-risk children below the age of five**.
- The **REACH** (Regional Education Assessment Crisis Services Habilitation) program has expanded its community-based crisis services to serve children.
- **Radford Transit**, operated by NRVCS, provided over 350,000 passenger trips in FY14 - an increase of more than 25,000 trips from the previous year.



50 NEW JOBS
created in FY14

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC IMPACT

Aside from being a provider of vital services to the community, NRVCS also makes a significant contribution to the local economy. During Fiscal Year 2014, the agency provided 729 jobs, paid over \$30 million in employee compensation and benefits, and spent more than \$41.5 million in total output/expenditures.

Using standard methods of economic impact analysis, it is estimated that these direct outputs may have supported 401 additional jobs in the community, along with more than \$14.3 million in additional labor income, and over \$27 million in additional economic output.¹

¹ Community Health Solutions estimation and analysis of economic impact using IMPLAN economic modeling system.

DRUG COURT

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added Trail. “These issues certainly aren’t unique to Pulaski County, but we have to be innovative in our approach to addressing them because we do have a limited amount of available resources and treatment options.”

Trail noted that with the sheer volume of offenders coming through the local court system, it is difficult to treat individual needs - which often leads to a high rate of recidivism. She went on to say that many substance abuse issues are not even discovered until the offender is on probation, making it even more difficult for court officials to ensure that appropriate treatment is provided to those who need it.

The Pulaski Drug Court consists of four phases: orientation/assessment and en-

gagement, treatment retention, recovery/relapse prevention, and “giving back”/transition/graduation. Participants are expected to meet the requirements of each phase before they are allowed to advance to the next. This includes pre-determined periods of abstinence from use of substances, which must be verified by drug screens.

Trail added that participants have up to two years to complete the program. At this point, the Pulaski Drug Court will enroll a maximum of ten participants annually. Two individuals are currently enrolled.

Progress of participants is monitored by the Drug Court Team, which currently meets bi-monthly to discuss individual cases and referrals. The team also makes recommendations to Judge Long regarding

incentives and/or sanctions for participants.

“We’re very early into the process, so I’m sure we’ll learn as we go along,” remarked Trail, “but we believe this model gives us a more coordinated treatment approach for substance abusing offenders in this community.”

Aside from addressing participants’ substance abuse and legal issues, Trail noted that the Drug Court program will work closely with other agencies in the community to take care of any collateral needs an individual may have, including: housing, transportation, job preparation, vocational training, and nutrition.

“We want to make sure participants have everything they need to be successful,” concluded Trail.

NRVCS’ CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

NRVCS works in partnership with consumers and other community agencies to implement innovative and evidence-based programs and services, including those targeted to assist individuals living with substance use disorders. All of these programs and services are designed to maximize value for both the individual consumer and the community.

Program	Innovation
Drug Court (Pulaski County)	Designed as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders with substance abuse-related charges, participants enter this program on a voluntary basis and receive substance abuse treatment while being subjected to intensive judicial supervision and frequent drug screenings. Participants must also complete community service, pay a portion of the program’s cost, and either be employed or pursuing educational goals before they can graduate.
Intensive Outpatient Services	NRVCS’ Intensive Outpatient Program (commonly known as “Stepping Stones”) is a group-oriented treatment model provided to individuals who do not require the intensive level of care of inpatient, residential, or day treatment services, but do require more intensive services than outpatient services. The program is offered at three different levels, depending on the individual’s level of need.
New Life Recovery Center	Located in Fairlawn, New Life is a residential treatment facility for adults living with substance use disorders. A 30-day program, New Life has ten beds and serves both males and females who are 18 years of age or older with a primary diagnosis of alcohol and/or drug dependence. Residents may also have co-occurring mental health disorders.
FLASH (Families Learning And Staying Healthy)	FLASH is a support group for families of persons with substance use disorders. Family members must attend FLASH meetings in order to visit their loved one at New Life during the designated weekly visitation hours. The group, which is free and confidential, is also open to anyone in the community. FLASH meets Monday evenings at the NRVCS Montgomery Center from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Bridge Program	Bridge is a jail diversion program that provides treatment for individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system and have mental health disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder. The program offers two groups that address these issues: Seeking Safety is an evidence-based practice that was specifically developed for individuals with a trauma history – and who may have Post-traumatic Stress Disorder -- as well as substance use disorders; and Beyond the Bars is a group designed to teach coping skills for mental health problems and substance use disorders, and to address criminal conduct. Participants are challenged to engage in more pro-social behaviors.
Medication Assistance Therapy (MAT)	MAT is the use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a research-based approach to the treatment of substance use disorders that has proven to be most successful. Suboxone/subutex is being used at NRVCS in conjunction with participation in group and/or individual counseling.
Additional Groups	Additional, less intensive, SA (substance abuse) outpatient groups are also offered at NRVCS. They include: MET 1 (Decisions): 1.5 hours per week MET 2 (Strategies): 1.5 hours per week MET 3 (Action): 2 hours per week Conscious Choices: 1.5 hours per week Women’s Circle: 2 hours per week



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Sullivan reappointed as NRVCS Interim Executive Director

BLACKSBURG - The NRVCS Board of Directors has re-appointed **Rosemary Sullivan** to serve as Interim Executive Director of the agency, approving a new contract that runs through December 2015.



Sullivan

The decision was made at the Board's December 4, 2014 meeting.

Sullivan, who was first named Interim Executive Director in December 2013, has been with NRVCS for more than 29 years. During her tenure with the agency, she has worked in a number of positions, including: a substance abuse counselor working with children and adults; substance abuse program coordinator; prevention and clinical services program coordinator; and child and family services program coordinator. Before taking the Executive Director position, Sullivan had most recently served as Director of NRVCS'

Crisis & Family Services Unit.

"I truly appreciate the Board's confidence in my abilities to continue to help lead this wonderful organization," remarked Sullivan. "I'm honored to have this opportunity and look forward to the year ahead."

Sullivan noted that 2015 would present a number of challenges for NRVCS, including increased accountability on a state level, a greater demand for services with the need to provide more immediate access, a limited qualified human resource pool to fill vacant positions, and the ability to further prove that services offered by the agency are effective (through measured outcomes).

"The world of behavioral health is ever-evolving and NRVCS must remain committed to meeting the needs of our community - particularly as we continue to shift toward a model of integrated care," Sullivan added. "Fortunately, we have an incredible foundation of quality service delivery to build upon, as well as a team of dedicated staff who work very hard to make a difference in the lives of those individuals and families who turn to us for help."

NRVCS to offer Mental Health First Aid trainings in 2015

Mental Health First Aid is an eight-hour course that teaches participants how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The training helps attendees identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

NRVCS will offer a number of these trainings to the public during 2015 that are specific to youth and also adults. Scheduled dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, January 27 (Youth)
- Tuesday, February 24 (Adult)
- Tuesday, March 24 (Youth)
- Tuesday, April 21 (Adult)
- Tuesday, May 19 (Youth)
- Tuesday, August 25 (Youth)
- Tuesday, Sept. 29 (Adult)

For more information about the training or to register, contact Casey Henshaw at chenshaw@nrvcs.org.