



CARING and SHARING

1-800-913-6109

“Renewing the Mind, Restoring the Spirit”

February 2009 Edition



EASTPOINTE RECOMMENDED BY STATE REVIEWERS TO MANAGE MEDICAID FUNDS

On January 13th Eastpointe was honored with the opportunity to be one of seven Local Management Entities (LME's) selected to be evaluated by State reviewers representing Medicaid (DMA) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). The purpose of the State evaluation was to determine the capability of each LME reviewed to assume oversight and utilization management, called “UM,” of the expenditure of Medicaid dollars involving the treatment of adults and children facing mental health, substance abuse, and/or developmental disability challenges.

If selected, Eastpointe could replace a company called “Value Options” in reviewing treatment plans and managing authorization and payment to mental health professionals treating individuals in Duplin, Lenoir, Sampson, and Wayne Counties. This is a tremendously important responsibility: UM's role includes making certain that the Medicaid dollars, our tax dollars, are wisely and properly spent.

Reviewers from DMA and DMH spent the day on January 13th asking questions and scrutinizing how well Eastpointe operates in its current role of managing State dollars used for treatment of uninsured and impoverished consumers through the private sector. This current responsibility includes authorizing and payment for these services using State and County funding. The reviewers also considered Eastpointe's customer services to providers, and assistance to persons having concerns about their treatment. Finally, the reviewers scrutinized the level of sophistication of Eastpointe's computer technology which is essential to tracking, treatment oversight, and managing Medicaid funds.

On January 27th, the NC Division of Health and Human Services recommended Eastpointe, Mecklenburg, Durham, and Western Highlands to be the LME's ready and capable of taking on the huge responsibility of Medicaid management of psychiatric services. Prior to Eastpointe taking this responsibility, many internal changes will need to be made as required by the Division of Medical Assistance contract. Over the next year, Eastpointe will begin working very hard to implement this new system.

TAR HEEL HUMAN SERVICES ADDS A PSYCHIATRIST TO THEIR TREATMENT TEAM

What makes Tar Heel Human Services really special is that the staff are local folks who went off to college and graduate school, and then came back home to help their friends and neighbors who struggle with mental health, substance dependency, speech-language, and developmental handicaps. The owner/managers of Tar Heel Human Services are Psychologist Michael Jones, MA, LPA; and his wife Kendra Jones, MS, SLP, a Licensed Speech Pathologist. Both are graduates of East Duplin High School and North Carolina Universities. Michael was born and raised in Albertson, and Kendra comes from Chinquapin. Michael and Kendra returned back home after completing their graduate degrees because they wanted to be near the good people of Duplin County.



Michael Jones, MA, LPA

Tar Heel is a thriving mental health clinic that is staffed by a team of caring and well educated local folks. Kristie Cavanaugh, LCSW, who specializes in counseling adults is in such demand that she rarely has an opening for a new client. Then, there is Amber Tuck, LCSW. Amber specializes in helping struggling teenage girls. Jack Blair, LCSW works with kids and adults. Michael Jones, LPA specializes in helping rebellious teenage boys. Michael is also a well experienced and highly demanded psychological examiner who receives requests for psychological evaluations from all around Eastern North Carolina.

One thing that makes Tar Heel Human services unique is the availability of a team of Licensed Speech Pathologists who evaluate and provide speech therapy to children who are exhibiting speaking abnormalities, and adults trying to overcome a speech handicap, like stuttering. The speech therapists at Tar Heel include Kendra Jones, SLP; Nicholas Ford, SLP; Robyn Hershberger, SLP; and Cynthia Robinson, SLP.

The newest addition to Tar Heel Human services' stellar staff is the addition of Board Certified Psychiatrist, Myleme Harrison, M.D. The addition of Dr. Harrison, to Tar Heel's staff will enable clients needing medication to be locally evaluated and treated. Of course, Dr. Harrison will be a readily available resource to Tar Heel's therapists when further evaluation and medication needs to be considered. For Tar Heel's clients it will be gas saving, one stop shopping!

Tar Heel's offices in Beulaville and Warsaw bring confidential, sophisticated mental health services home to the folks of Duplin County and the nearby communities, which saves the cost and time of travel to distant urban areas. But, what makes Tar Heel Human Services really special is the availability of local professionals who know and appreciate the culture and values of Southeastern North Carolina. *For more information call them: 910-298-6207 and say "Howdy neighbor!"*

N.C. Project Lifesaver available for Wayne County Residents

N.C. Project Lifesaver provides bracelets with homing devices to help local officials quickly locate a person who is lost. This bracelet has a sensor that transmits a unique radio signal to a special receiver that picks up the individual wearing the bracelet. The local Search and Rescue Team of Wayne County has been trained to use the locator to search for missing persons who wear the Lifesaver bracelets.

There is a cost for the bracelet and a monthly charge for the battery.

The bracelets are available from N.C. Project Lifesaver.

EXCELLENT AID FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO MAY WANDER AND NOT FIND THEIR WAY HOME!

For more information, please call

Ann Newsome of A Small Miracle, Inc. @ 919-751-9089

Major Derrick Ellis of NC Project Lifesaver @ 1-800-420-7604

To learn more about N.C. Project Lifesaver, you may visit their website at

www.ncpltaskforce.org

Eastpointe Makes Customer Services their First Priority



Who is a “customer?” If you contact Eastpointe seeking services, or seeking services for a friend, then you are a “customer.” The word “consumer” is also used because customers can also be consumers: consuming (using) services. If you are a mental health services provider seeking assistance from Eastpointe then, -to Eastpointe- you are also a “customer.”

If you think the words “customer” and “consumer” are confusing, then just think of customers and consumers as: “clients.” Clients are customers., customers who “consume” services.

The key to success is the same for Eastpointe as it is for any company, and that includes all of the private mental health clinics that exist throughout North Carolina. If we treat our “customers” well then they will return to us and they will recommend us to others.

Knowing the importance of quality care, on January 16th Eastpointe’s Director ordered all Eastpointe staff to attend a half day training by renowned public relations consultant John Formica at James Sprunt Community College. Mr. Formica is the former manager of all of the Disney World Hotels in Orlando Florida. Anyone who has been to Disney World knows customer service is their first priority.

John Formica, Nationally Renowned Customer Services Trainer

John Formica emphasized the importance of the relationship, suggesting that each customer should be treated the way you would treat your grandmother or a friend. Mr. Formica explained, rather than telling a customer what you will or won’t do; ask the customer: “What would you like for us to do?”

John Formica taught the Eastpointe staff that the customers are the most important part of any company because without the customers there would be no need for the company to exist.





NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you are the recipient of mental health, substance abuse services, or services related to developmental disability or traumatic brain injury, or you are the caregiver/guardian of a “consumer” of one of these services, you may have some concerns or questions. Eastpointe is responsible for oversight of these services provided in Duplin, Lenoir, Sampson, and Wayne Counties. Our Agency includes a “Customer Services Department” that is here to assist you with any complaints, questions, or concerns.

You may contact Eastpointe’s Customer Services Department by calling 1-800-513-4002 Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or you can e-mail our Customer Services staff: lmewborn@eastpointe.net; or kmurphy@eastpointe.net. We also have attached a Customer Services Assistance Form that you may download and e-mail to us.

Important note: If you return to the “For Consumers” section of the Eastpointe Website you will find this form in a format that you can download and type in to without disrupting the lines.

CUSTOMER SERVICES ASSISTANCE FORM

Please indicate your name and a telephone number where we can contact you. If we leave a message it will only be to ask that you “call Kim, or Lucinda at: 1-800-513-4002.”

Your Name: _____ Telephone Number _____ Name of
concerned person – if different _____ Date: _____

If this is a complaint, please indicate the name of person or provider whom the complaint is
against: _____

Please describe your concern, question, or complaint:

Thank you for sharing your concern with us, someone from Customer Services will be contacting you.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT MARIJUANA?

By Dr. Jonathan Barnes, Psychologist



Olympic Gold Medalist Michael Phelps has recently been a hot topic in the news because of a photograph showing him smoking marijuana through a "bong." Discussions have ranged from how Michael is a failed role model for youth to, marijuana's medicinal benefits, to whether marijuana should be legalized.

Researchers have repeatedly found about 20 percent, that's one in five, of America's older teen-agers smoke marijuana. I'm not sure if that meets the criteria of "Everybody does it."

"Marijuana" is Spanish for "Mary Jane," but most people call it "pot" or "weed." The name "weed" makes sense since marijuana is a mixture of ground up leaves from the hemp plant. Hemp was once used to make rope. It's organic. So what's the big deal?

We all know it is against the law to possess, sell, or cultivate marijuana. Besides getting in legal trouble, a positive drug test could get you fired or not hired. Getting "busted" could keep you from obtaining certification for a career like nursing, law enforcement, or teaching. It could keep you from joining or staying in the military.

Why are employers and lawmakers so bent out of shape over this little ground up weed? Marijuana changes your mental state. Pot smokers enjoy the relaxed, mellow, "stoned," "high" marijuana gives them. Sometimes smokers get paranoid and nervous and have what is called a "bad trip." Still, others who have tried pot claim they felt nothing. The type of reaction may depend on how much of the drug, called "THC" is in the weed.

"Stoned" is an accurate description because pot mellows you out so that you feel like just laying back and "chilling out" -like a stone. When I was in college back in the 1960s we used to watch the regular pot smokers, called "pot heads" flunk out. I remember we would say, "He's gone!" "He's wasted!" We found it kind of humorous because the "pot heads" would sort of just lay around missing classes and exams, like a stone. They usually had a silly looking grin and blood shot eyes. They didn't even seem to mind that they were failing. We would say to them, "Hey man, don't you know you're going to flunk out?" And they would just lay back and say, "Yeah man! Ain't it a b_____!"

Olympic Gold Medalist, Michael Phelps Caught smoking marijuana



Words like "stoned" and "wasted" are the language of the "pot-head" culture. You are "wasted" because when you are "stoned" you aren't too functional. What is less obvious is that little by little, ever so quietly, your life and all you could have been gets "wasted."

The drug in marijuana stays in your body for several weeks, which is why you can still get "busted" on a drug test for as much as a month after you last smoked. Although you may not still feel "mellow" the next day, the drug is still affecting your body, like lowering your testosterone level, which may have something to do with why a regular pot smoker becomes less ambitious.

There are a bunch of studies that show marijuana interferes with short term memory, coordination, reaction time, alertness, driving ability, concentration, learning new material, and problem solving. It's really quite simple, the scientists test the same people on and off "THC" and find they do worse on various tests when they are stoned.

You become less alert and intelligent on pot because your brain is like "chilling out." Ambitious thoughts and worries quiet down. Your brain goes into this mellow state where you don't worry about little things like doing well on a test, paying bills, surviving, or getting ahead. One day, it dawns on you: Hey! Everyone, well, at least the 80 percent who don't smoke pot, have passed you by.

That's the problem with marijuana: It quietly takes away your ambition and leaves you behind saying, "Hey Man! What's happening?" The answer is: You got "wasted."

Would you like to know about Eastpointe's Benefit Plan for State funded "IPRS" Services?

Treatment of a mental illness, substance dependency, or developmental disability is paid for by the North Carolina Government when a person needing these services ("a consumer") has no health insurance, no Medicaid or Medicare, and lives on a very tight budget so that the person cannot afford to pay for professional help without financial assistance from the State.

Let's say, for example, you are receiving IPRS (State paid) counseling by a licensed mental health professional for depression. You might wonder, "How many times can I see my therapist in a month under Eastpointe's management of the State's benefit plan for mental health assistance?" To get the answer, take your computer mouse and left-side click two times on the red PDF rectangle (icon) below. Then, when the icon opens up to "Eastpointe Benefit Plan for State Funded Services," scroll down with your mouse to the bottom of page 3 and you will see that the State will pay for up to four therapy sessions per month.



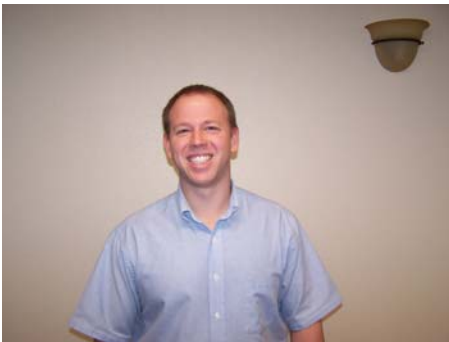
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***Eastpointe Benefit Plan for State Funded Services**

*Click twice with the left-side clicker on your mouse on the red "icon" above to see Eastpointe's Benefit Plan for State Funded Services. Then, search for the kinds of services you need or receive.

MOBILE CRISIS IS EXPANDING SERVICES TO DUPLIN, SAMPSON, LENOIR, AND WAYNE COUNTIES

In case you haven't heard, Mobile Crisis is a mental health support service where mental health providers will come to you. It is sort of like the old days when doctors used to make house calls. It won't be a medical doctor coming to your home. But, the counselor who comes to you will have the constant support of a psychiatrist as well as staff with special training in helping others with challenges such as drug dependencies or the special needs of people with handicaps like mental retardation. Of course, the Mobile Crisis Team can't come to you for any problem, but if you or a loved one is in a "crisis" than the Mobile Crisis Team might be just what you need. And best of all, they are standing by everyday and every hour, both day and night!



George Carr, LCSW Easter Seals Mobile Crisis Team Leader

Until now the only private company providing Mobile Crisis in the four counties managed by Eastpointe has been Waynesboro Family Clinic in Goldsboro, and they have done an excellent job in Wayne County responding to emergencies in our schools and neighborhoods. This new Mobile Crisis Service managed by Easter Seals UCP will greatly expand the availability and capacity of Mobile Crisis services.

The Easter Seals Mobile Crisis Team will start out in Duplin and Sampson Counties late February and then expand their services in to Lenoir and finally Wayne Counties this spring. The way someone needing immediate assistance can obtain this special help is through calling 1-800-913-6109. A crisis worker will ask some questions and determine if Mobile Crisis assistance is the best course of action. If it is, you won't have to hang up: you will be hooked up directly with a member of the Mobile Crisis Team who will make arrangements to see you right away. It's that easy!

DUPLIN-GENERAL HOSPITAL'S PSYCHIATRIC UNIT OFFERS A SPECIAL TYPE OF TREATMENT

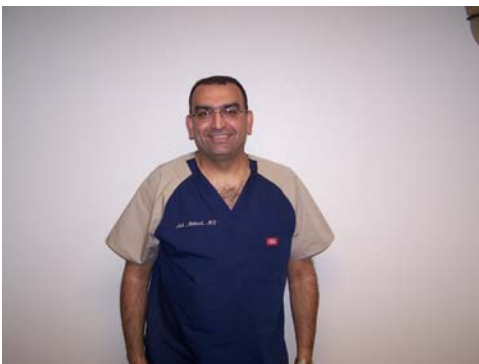
There isn't a scientific name for their special kind of treatment, which may explain why a lot of bigger institution-like hospitals don't seem to know about it. They call it "home-like country lovin." The main reason "home-like country lovin" is the kind of caring environment patients discover at Duplin-General Hospital's Psychiatric Unit is the people who work there. Simply put, they are down-home country folks.

Don't think that makes them any less sophisticated than the big city doctors. Nope, Duplin-General's Psychiatric Unit is staffed by psychiatrists who are Board Certified in Child and Adult Psychiatry, Registered Nurses, and Licensed Clinical Social Workers. And, their staff are not a bunch of young whipper-snappers either - hoping to move on soon to the big city hospitals. Most of their staff have been there since the unit opened in 1987! Darn! It's got to be a great place if the staff stay there that long! Being small and country like, they have kept the unit small: only twenty adult beds. Sometimes they are slam full, and a feller is lucky to get in. Duplin-General could make their psychiatric unit bigger, but then they might lose their "home-like country lovin" character.

Kay Hinson, RN, Program Director



Duplin-General is a traditional psychiatric hospital, which means they don't treat drug addictions or detoxify people who have been tipping to many beer cans. But, being country doctors and nurses, they understand how a few country folk sometimes treat their depression or bad nerves with a little too much alcohol and get in trouble. When that happens, they'll take you in and give you some nerve medicine that works.



So, if you ever get to that desperate place where your nerves are so bad that you just feel like you can't take it anymore, call them 910-296-2786. You might need to leave home for a few days, but you will swear you feel like you are still with your friends and family.

Dr. Ash Mikhail, Board Certified Psychiatrist



SOMETIMES TAKING MEDICATION CAN BE REALLY DIFFICULT

By Dr. Bryan Spader, Eastpointe's Medical Director

We humans are creatures of habit. Anything new has to find a place among all the things we do every day. Until taking medications fits in to your daily routine, just like brushing your teeth, it is so easy to forget to take your medicine.

A possible solution that often works is to connect this new activity (taking your medication) with something you already do every day. An example would be to place the pill bottle(s) next to your tooth brush, or if that doesn't work, to even attach the pill

bottle to your tooth brush with a rubber band. Pick an activity that you do every day and connect pill taking with this event.

Another big issue with taking medication correctly is whether the person taking the medication believes he or she needs the medication. With such doubts, the person may not fill the prescription, or put any effort into remembering to take the medication. If the doctor does not know the patient is “medication noncompliant,” the doctor might be misled in to thinking the medication is not working, and that could lead to unnecessary or unwarranted medication changes. It is very important for the patient to feel comfortable in expressing his or her reservations about taking the medication, and that those who the patient confides in listen to the patient’s concerns. This will allow the doctor and other health care providers to discuss the pros and cons of medication compliance with the patient. A well informed patient is more likely to decide to take the medication as directed.

Many psychiatric illnesses are chronic, meaning they do not go away, and because of this, it is a very big step to come to terms that one has a chronic –permanent- mental illness that can be treated, but not cured. Many patients desperately want to believe that the diagnosis is incorrect. Or, the patient may begin to believe that he/she no longer needs to take the medication, especially when the medication has been working and the patient is doing well.

All medications have side effects. Antipsychotic medications used to treat illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder can cause drowsiness, difficulty concentrating, sexual dysfunctions, a sudden drop in blood pressure when one stands up-causing dizziness, unusual muscle movements or spasms, dry mouth and thirstiness, blurred vision making it difficult to watch TV, constipation, feeling hungry all the time, weight gain, and a condition called “metabolic syndrome” that is composed of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

Doctors and pharmacists are required by law to tell their patients about all of these potential side effects. After learning of all of these possible side-effects, it is understandable why many patients become afraid to take their medicine. Also, if the side effects are too unpleasant, the patient is at high risk of stopping the medication .

But, the decision to stop taking psychiatric medications also has side effects, such as becoming ill again and ending up back in the hospital. That is why it is so important that the doctor and patient have an honest and trusting relationship. Through sharing information with one’s doctor and therapist a patient may be able to obtain medications that counter the side effects, or, receive a lower dosage of the problem medication, or, even have a change in medication.

Most important is that everyone involved: the patient, the family, the therapist, and the doctor communicate. That way they can together find solutions that help the patient be well and remain out of the hospital.