

Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association

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RCPA becomes leading advocate for Pa. methadone providers

PATOD partnership puts approximately 60% of state's OTPs under one organization

HARRISBURG, Pa. (Oct. 5, 2023) – The Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) will become the leading voice for Pennsylvania's opioid treatment programs (OTPs) as it welcomes Pennsylvania Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (PATOD) into its membership ranks.

"It's an honor to not only welcome PATOD but to represent the majority of Pennsylvania's methadone providers as RCPA members. We are proud that PATOD's members recognize RCPA's value as a strategic partner who is aligned with their policy, regulatory, and legislative priorities," said Richard S. Edley, PhD, RCPA President and CEO. "RCPA's infrastructure, the OTPs that are currently members, and the addition of PATOD will unite and amplify our advocacy in ensuring access to medication and counseling to treat opioid use disorder as Pennsylvania continues to fight the opioid epidemic."

With the addition of PATOD, RCPA now represents approximately 60 percent of Pennsylvania's OTPs.

Josh Nirella, Regional Director of Acadia's Comprehensive Treatment Centers division and President of PATOD, said that RCPA's strategic approach to advocacy on behalf of providers, its relationships with key stakeholders, and expertise on and experience with key issues made partnership and membership an easy decision. The collaboration of the two organizations will result in greater leverage to enhance the treatment landscape in Pennsylvania, so OTPs can more effectively serve those in need through low-barrier access to methadone and counseling.

"Research demonstrates that medication combined with counseling is the gold standard for treating opioid use disorder," Nirella said. "Pennsylvania, much like the rest of the country, is in the grips of an opioid epidemic, with this disease impacting people from every walk of life. PATOD will be able to build on the work we have done over the years through a collaborative partnership with RCPA and its existing OTP provider members. Together, we will have a stronger, more prominent voice in setting policy, reforming regulations that are barriers to treatment, and reducing

the unnecessary administrative burden under which all addiction treatment providers are struggling today.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Health’s Opioid Data Dashboard estimates that 299,000 Pennsylvanians battled a drug use disorder in 2020, the most recent data available. From Jan. 1, 2018 through July 15, 2023, emergency responders administered nearly 90,000 doses of naloxone, the medication that reverses opioid overdoses. There were nearly 53,000 emergency room visits for opioid overdoses in that same time period.

The Office of the Pennsylvania Attorney General reports that 5,168 Pennsylvanians died in 2021 from overdose, and an average of 14 Pennsylvanians die every day from overdose.

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About the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA):

With close to 400 members, the majority of who serve over one million Pennsylvanians annually, Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) is among the largest and most diverse state health and human services trade associations in the nation. RCPA provider members offer mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual and developmental disabilities, children and youth, criminal and juvenile justice, brain injury, medical rehabilitation, pediatric rehabilitation, and physical disabilities and aging services, across all settings and levels of care. Visit www.paproviders.org for more information.