

Summary Debriefing

October 22, 2009



Access to Services:

- **Participants do not need to travel between Riverton and Lander to attend court;** participant transportation was an issue identified in a prior SYNC review and the Court Assisted Supervised Treatment of Fremont County (hereafter referred to as court supervised treatment program) solved that by now holding court in both Lander and Riverton.
- **Heavily scheduled court dockets have been reduced** by the court supervised treatment program by employing their own magistrate.
- **A court supervised treatment program counselor who does assessments and provides treatment** insures that participants have access to timely services. This has solved delays that were discovered in a prior SYNC review.
- **Collaboration between the Fremont County Alcohol Crisis Center and newly opened Mountain View Transitions Center** provides participants with a true systems of care wrap around approach to services.
 - Both programs have case managers who seem to collaborate well together.
- The Fremont County Alcohol Crisis center, which is a private nonprofit, has a **contract with Fremont Counseling for a case worker to provide services.**
- **Fremont Counseling has an intensive outpatient treatment program.**
- While systemic in nature to most areas in Wyoming, individuals who do not have money or insurance have a significantly longer wait for residential treatment than those who do have insurance or financial means.
- Medication management is a problem in this area; Fremont Counseling has a psychiatrist who is only available periodically. Participants have reported up to a month and a half wait to make use of these services.
- A participant reported that it took personnel over two weeks for Fremont Counseling to “write up” an intake.
- It is reported that there are lacking mental health services in the community with regards to quantity, not necessarily quality.
- It was reported that it can be at least a two month wait for participants to get into Fremont Counseling due to certain procedural requirements:
 - It is reported that Fremont Counseling requires direct contact from a prospective participant requesting services and if that person is indigent, may not be able to read or write and incarcerated there is no way for them to make that personal request of the counseling center. Even if this is not an actual policy of Fremont Counseling, a better effort to explain these procedures is needed in the area.



Quality of Services including support for recovery:

- **Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)** is used by this court supervised treatment court with all participants.¹
- It appears that this court supervised treatment program has put a great emphasis on mental health needs of participants in the past year and that the Wyoming Department of Corrections probation officer recognizes the importance as well.
- Riverton Memorial Hospital, as reported by one participant, is seen as being discriminatory against people with substance and alcohol abuse issues.
- It is reported by some people interviewed that Native Americans are treated somewhat differently in the community; **this does not appear to be an issue in the court supervised treatment program**; the program employs a Native American who does an outstanding job with all participants.
- **The court supervised treatment program has a magistrate that only presides over this program**; in a revocation the matter goes back to the sentencing judge. The sentencing judge makes court supervised treatment program a condition of the probation order for client access into the program.
- It is the **immediate consequences of the court supervised treatment program** that provides participants with a degree of accountability where in regular courts that matter can be set for months later.
- **Instant assessments**, literally in several hours, are now available for participants participating in this court supervised treatment program.



Collaboration:

- **Mountain View Transitions** provides the court supervised treatment program participants a great place to remain “clean and sober” as they work the program and transition back into society. Eventually, participants will be able to acquire their own phone and cable television, for example, as they work through the transition center and “establish” themselves in the community. Once they leave the facility, they are able to transfer those services to their own residence.
- There is **good communication and collaboration** among providers in the area.
- Communication and collaboration between the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone program and local agencies is somewhat tenuous. This appears to be a systemic, long term issue that needs to be resolved. This also is a problem when an active court supervised treatment program participant may be wanting and needing services on the Wind River Indian Reservation; however that service is operating at one point, and then quits operating unexpectedly for lack of funding or management.

¹ More information about MRT can be obtained at: <http://moral-reconciliation-therapy.com/>.

- This court supervised treatment program is an incredible program that is serving this community very, very well. We encourage the program administrator and staff to seize every opportunity possible to communicate with others and share appropriate information about this program and services.

“You have this disease forever; by not drinking,
you are taking your medicine!”

Court Assisted Supervised Treatment of Fremont County²

Riverton and Lander, Wyoming

October 2009

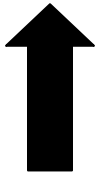


Overarching principals as reported from review participants and others:

- A professional reports that the paperwork and inefficiencies in the system as a whole minimizes time spent with participants.
- While not specific to any one case, participants and others interviewed report that confidentiality is a problem to maintain in smaller communities.
- Approximately 50% of this court supervised treatment program participants clientele is Native American:
 - One participant reported as an example, that a Caucasian woman had an attorney and was able to negotiate a “better deal” resulting in reduced incarceration; the Native American woman who did not have the finances to afford the attorney yet had the same charges and circumstances as the Caucasian women and similar past offenses remained incarcerated. While the public defender program seems very dedicated and determined for their participants, it may be that there is a shortage of them.
- The court supervised treatment program was seen by a treatment provider as subscribing to and practicing a true “wrap around” process.
- Law enforcement is seen generally to be culturally sensitive in the community.
- Participants report that treatment from the court supervised treatment program personnel, and the court itself, is very consistent despite the participant’s ethnicity.
- It is reported that Fremont Counseling staff and the court supervised treatment program staff interact and work well together despite a severing of a contractual relationship in the last year.
- This court supervised treatment program is a four phase program with a phase five probation period of at least six months to one year.
- Court supervised treatment program graduation is conducted every three months.
- Participants are accepted into the court supervised treatment program one of two ways:
 - Track I = Jail based treatment, and
 - Track II = all other entries.

² A total of three samples were reviewed; while many of the findings are specific to Fremont County Adult Court Supervised Treatment Program, a number of them in this report are shared and/or owned by other entities.

- Due to the consistency of policy and effect service, an associate of the court supervised treatment program felt relief when a participant was in the program.
- The court supervised treatment program team meets and “votes” on who can be admitted to the program.



Strength Findings:

- The court supervised treatment program staff requirement of being a “*part of something every day*” allows the participant to discover or rediscover life skills; interacting with others gives the participant hope, several interviewed indicated.
- The court supervised treatment program coordinator installed a sense of confidence in the participant from the very first meeting.
- At court supervised treatment program graduations; many graduates describe the program as “saving their lives.”
- The court supervised treatment program coordinator was described as being a “person of her word;” this was particularly important to one participant.
- Unique to the court supervised treatment program, personnel distinguish between a total relapse and a lapse; this philosophy seems to work well in recommending sanctions.
- While the magistrate can sentence up to 30 days in jail he reports he would much rather use incentives than the sanctions to inspire the participants.
- The court supervised treatment program case manager is “encouraging and wise” according to one participant.
- While hearsay in nature, participants report that this court supervised treatment program is running much better today, than it has in years past due to the “new” program coordinator who has only been on the job for approximately two years.
- This court supervised treatment program allows and encourages spouses to attend program appearances; this is a good first step regarding a “whole family” approaching to treating the addiction disease.
- The court supervised treatment program facilitated a participant going to visit the participant’s mother before surgery.
- Partners in the community generally perceive the court supervised treatment program treatment provider and the program administrator as truly growing into their job with fresh, new and effective ideas.
- While it may be completely happenstance, there appears to be a nice balance of court supervised treatment program workers who are in recovery themselves and can relate to what the participants are experiencing but more importantly can identify “warning flags” from a participant’s behavior at certain points in the process.

- Incentives and sanctions are clear to the participants and seem to be consistent. The court seems to recognize the need to be creative with incentives as well and apparently the program will benefit from this in the future.
- It appears that all of those who work for the court supervised treatment program give consistent answers and are well coordinated; such as if a participant has to change an appointment, the participant can call one person and the rest of the program team will know the information. This was reported by a participant of the program.
- A spouse of a participant is glad that the court supervised treatment program is lengthy as it helps the participants really understand and appreciate what a clean and sober lifestyle can be like.
- Due to the court supervised treatment program now having “in house treatment” there is much better coordination and effective services for the participant. Additionally, it appears that other professionals such as the case manager and probation officer have better and more consistent information.
- In addition to a therapist now being employed by the court supervised treatment program, there is also a therapist assistant now employed by the program.
- As seen elsewhere in Wyoming, public defenders seem to truly have the best interests of their clients at mind. In at least one case reviewed, the public defender assigned encouraged the participant initially to become involved in the court supervised treatment program not only because it reduced the amount of jail time the client would spend but because the client needed the assistance and treatment of the court supervised treatment program.
- This court supervised treatment program is now using the “Hazelden Model;”³ the program coordinator cites the strengths of this as consistency and using a model that has been tested and proven. Participants seem to have a much better understanding of their situations after using this model.
- The argument could be made, and was suggested, that having the same person do the assessments that does the treatment might “skew” the assessment in favor of a certain treatment. That same argument could have been made however during the last review having Fremont Counseling do both. However, in this program it appears to be working well and providing a smooth transition between assessment and treatment for participants. Additionally the requirement for use of the standard Alcohol Severity Index (ASI) seems to provide consistent and accurate findings. Additionally, these assessments can be accomplished and the results ready within hours.
- There seems to be very good communications, coordination and collaboration between the Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC) probation officer and the court

³ More information about Hazelden can be obtained at: <http://www.hazelden.org/>.

supervised treatment program probation officer. The program probation officer works from the Lander office and the DOC probation officer works from Riverton.

- Between this review and the last review it appears that the reputation of the court supervised treatment program has consistently improved creating a solid foundation for the program.
- The case manager has a very good understanding of the fine line between professional and personal relationships with clients.



Opportunities for Improvement:⁴

- Participant felt that all Peak Wellness wanted to do was make the participant a “zombie” by prescribing Lexapro.
- Participant felt like Peak Wellness “does not care” about the participant but simply as a means to obtain payment for services.⁵
- An 18 year old was sent to the Wyoming State Penitentiary for revocation of probation from a breaking and entering charge when 15 and vandalism when 17. This subject did not receive any services while in the penitentiary and actually came out a better criminal with unmet needs for services.
- Participant found out about the court supervised treatment program from another inmate while incarcerated.
- An associated professional reports that funding should be increased for the court supervised treatment program to hire more personnel and be more stringent on probation checks.
- Participant tried to obtain services from Fremont Counseling while incarcerated, but the wait was two months.
- Fremont Counseling was not getting an ASI done for “many” weeks according to the client, which effected the client’s ability initially to enter inpatient treatment.
- Participants with families report that they might benefit from just a little more family time and possibly family treatment services.
- Public defenders in Wyoming seem to be put in a unique position of often times having to recommend a client to treatment. With this, a greater emphasis may need to be placed on “how” a participant enters these types of programs.
- Currently, the case manager has a caseload of 35; it appears that the court supervised treatment program may be going to hire another case manager.
- The White Buffalo Treatment Program in Phase I was insufficient according to one participant; it did not meet regularly and without the participant having a driver’s

⁴ Not all opportunities for improvement are specific to Fremont County Adult Court Supervised Treatment Program.

⁵ This comment should be framed in the context that the participant may not be a willing participant.

license transportation was an issue. The participant reported that at least 60% of the time the program did not meet regularly.

- Residential treatment for adolescents is lacking in this area; juveniles have to be sent out of the community.
- There is a need for psychiatry services in the community; while it exists at Fremont Counseling once a week, it is reported to be up to a six week wait to obtain those services.
- It is reported by some that there is a shortage of mental health and substance abuse counseling services in this area.
- Communication; participant went from the court supervised treatment program to Mountain View Transitions without much advance notice to Mountain View Transitions.⁶ However the case manager for the court supervised treatment program and the case manager for Mountain View Transitions felt that they can and will coordinate very effectively in the future.
- While generally reported as positive internally, two collaborators with the court supervised treatment program would like to see a greater sharing of information when possible, and greater external communication. We too encourage this because this is an incredible program with great results that others need to know about!
- Consistent communications with the Tribes is a continual struggle; unfortunately people give up communicating when something doesn't happen immediately.
- One collaborator questioned whether with solely the one assessment and treatment provider in house could dual diagnosis participants be properly diagnosed?
- Fremont County Transitions is an incredible resource for the proper participants; one concern expressed is that if clients do not have enough structure in the program, there could be the potential for a negative environment to become systemic and affect the treatment progress of the court supervised treatment program participants.
- When someone has relapsed at least three times, how long should a participant remain in the program utilizing resources that someone else may benefit from?
- Fremont County is a very large geographic county; it may be that participants who live out of town a distance do not have the same amount of visits as participants who are easier to "drop by" and "check on" according to one client.
- Fremont Counseling was described as a joke according to one participant; the participant cited being left alone with the participant's own urine sample where the participant could have tampered with it.

⁶ It should be noted that Mountain View Transitions, a transitional living program, just opened to clients and this participant was one of the first two clients for the program.



General Findings:

- Fremont County Transitions charges eligible residents 30% of their gross income; while this may seem steep it is realistic and helps participants prepare for the “real world.”
- A judge in Fremont County advised a participant that the court supervised treatment program could be done either in Laramie County or Fremont County but the subject did not have enough time “hanging over his head” for Laramie County’s admission standards. The subject then came back to Fremont County with his family and is doing the court supervised treatment program here.
- White Buffalo conducted an assessment and had the results prepared within ten days.
- The court supervised treatment program fees are \$10.00 per week; participants can do community service to pay a portion of those fees; all fees have to be current and paid before moving phases.
- Participants in the program are encouraged to think: One participant is learning how to get angry and handle it without resorting to using or drinking.
- The minister of a church that a participant strongly believed in was found to be an adulterous among other things and that literally destroyed the participant’s ability to trust others and contributed to inappropriate behavior.
- A participant has been entrenched in the punitive, criminal justice system for over a decade; the participant was raised around alcohol and has now devoted over a decade of life to being institutionalized and in prison. Prison did nothing to treat the underlying alcohol issues.
- While in prison, a court supervised treatment program participant had to convince himself to “hate prison” rather than to be “comfortable in prison.”
- A participant reported having a missing identity; Native American father who would not allow participant to explore or learn about the family heritage.
- Mountain View Transition Center, which opened on September 29, 2009 with two court supervised treatment program clients, can host up to 16 participants; physically they start on the second floor, transition to the ground floor and then transition to the apartment style housing.
- Subject’s father died and that was the point in which the subject started abusing alcohol and drugs.
- Treatment at Central Wyoming Counseling was reported to be very beneficial for a participant, but the participant relapsed and began abusing again when coming back to the community without any transitional services.
 - In another interview, it was stated that “everyone” coming from treatment should transition into society through a transitional center.

- Subject was able to enter Central Wyoming Counseling within two weeks of application.
- With an intensive supervised program; the program personnel have got to be consistent in all of their actions; while not a specific negative finding, this was a general comment.
- Again, not specific to this particular court supervised treatment program but an interviewee questioned: “Do participants want to be on probation so that they have a reason or crutch to say no?”

“Treatment with a hammer over your head!”