



Valley Health Associates

OUTPATIENT PROGRAM *(Youth and Adult)*

Client Handbook
Program Requirements & Client Rights

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday 9am to 6pm
Closed for Lunch: 1:00pm to 2:00pm

427 Pajaro Street Suite 5 & 6
Salinas, CA 93901
Phone: (831) 424-6655
Fax: (831) 424-9807

WWW.VALLEYHEALTHASSOCIATES.COM

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE (Ask for the Crisis Team): (831) 755-4300
SUICIDE HOT LINE: 1-877-633-5433 (Toll Free)

For medical emergencies please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room

MISSION

Valley Health Associates (VHA) is a non-profit organization offering intervention, prevention, and treatment services for those suffering from opioid and alcohol use disorders. Through Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), Valley Health Associates offers an individualized and evidence-based approach provided in a safe, caring, and supportive environment. Our main focus is to promote recovery and wellness through healthy and productive lifestyle changes while using a whole person approach to care.

CORE VALUES

Here at Valley Health Associates we are committed to achieving excellence by ensuring each person served is:

- Treated with dignity and respect
- Ensured their privacy and confidentiality is and will be maintained and protected
- Given supportive and responsive service in a professional manner; and is
- Provided compassionate and meaningful drug treatment

If there are any problems with the Client's participating in our programs, they are encouraged to discuss the problems with their primary counselor, the medical staff, and/or the program director. Any conflicts of interest which may arise between the Client and staff will be resolved to the best interest of those concerned. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding our program requirements, Client's rights, or the philosophy of VHA's programs, please address these issues with staff.

CHARITABLE CHOICE

In compliance with Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 54, it is the practice of VHA and all contracted staff that they shall:

Incorporate language prohibiting discrimination against individuals based on religion within service modalities.

The purpose of this belief is to ensure that VHA staff and contract providers comply with guidelines in Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations Part 54: Nondiscrimination and Institutional Safeguards for Religious Providers.

CLAS STANDARDS

The National CLAS Standards are a set of 15 action steps intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities by providing a blueprint for individuals and health and health care organizations to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Valley Health Associates is committed to the collective set of CLAS mandates, guidelines, and recommendations issued by the HHS Office of Minority Health intended to inform, guide, and facilitate required and recommended practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.

OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Outpatient Services provides a nonresidential recovery program to qualified participants (Youth: 12 to 17; Young Adults: 18 to 24; Adults 18 years old and older). The program premise is that a significant

portion of the people seeking Recovery from an alcohol and/or drug use will benefit from attending a program facilitated by a trained professional staff while attending an outside support group such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Clients are referred to 12-Step meetings as a part of his/her Treatment Plan during Intake. Some people will also seek membership in a spiritual organization or church. Outpatient allows participants to continue to work, attend school or otherwise meet obligations while they gain on-going sobriety. A client will learn to recognize issues which trigger addictive behavior and make the necessary changes in his/her life. We also assist clients to seek additional services necessary to maintain on-going progress such as family therapy, medical referrals, legal assistance, school support or services aimed at those who may need financial assistance to meet their needs. This may happen as a part of their Intake/Assessment or maybe provided during their treatment program.

We seek to provide effective and respectful group and individual counseling that encourages clients to also develop a clean and sober support network in the larger recovery community, with as little interruption as possible to the client's commitments. All clinical staff are licensed or certified by a credentialed body recognized by the State of California. Valley Health Associates' Outpatient Services is certified by the State of California as an Outpatient Alcohol and Drug Treatment Facility.

Clients attend two groups or individual sessions per week facilitated by trained staff. Outpatient materials are based on a curriculum developed by the Matrix Institute focusing on Alcohol and Drug Education, developing Early Recovery Skills and Relapse Prevention. Evidence-Based materials from Hazelden Institute in addition to Matrix are also implemented as a comprehensive and practical guide for conducting group and individual treatment sessions for persons who have a substance use disorder with sessions dedicated to serve clients who also have a co-occurring mental health disorder.

People seeking admission to Outpatient Services program should already be able to remain abstinent from alcohol and drug use for at least 2-3 days without the structure of a hospital or an inpatient program. Those clients who chose this program are frequently employed, are students or need to remain in the home to provide care for family members. The exact length of time is determined by the client, staff and referral sources. Most clients have some sort of legal, school or court obligations that often specify particular lengths of times in the program. With minimal disruptions in treatment, a client can successfully transition to Recovery Services after completing 3 months of Outpatient Services.

CLIENT INFORMATION

Valley Health Associates' (VHA) Outpatient Program provides an assessment to determine eligibility for a substance use disorder, as well as individual and group counseling services, treatment planning, medical follow-up services, case management, referral services, and alcohol and drug education.

Our staff, which includes qualified, experienced medical and counseling personnel, are dedicated to helping you, the Client, to eliminate physical and psychological addiction to alcohol and other drugs. We are here to help you make these positive changes in all areas of your life; educationally, vocationally, spiritually, socially, medically, and legally. You also have the right to participate in all decisions related to your care. Every effort will be made by our trained staff to provide effective, efficient, and comprehensive care for you in a safe, clean, accessible, therapeutic and confidential environment throughout your treatment.

VHA's Outpatient program is operated within the laws and regulations under state statutes: Health and Safety Code, Article 3, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 9 (Revised June, 1998). We are also regulated by federal regulations; Center of Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT); and Drug

Enforcement Administration (DEA). We are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities (CARF).

All information and records obtained in the course of your treatment are also subject to the following; Confidentiality and Disclosures provisions contained in Article 7 (commencing with Section 5325) of Chapter 2 of 1 of Division 5 of the Welfare and Institution Code; Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations; HIPAA Privacy Rule and VHA's Privacy Practices. Your primary counselor will explain your rights to confidentiality during program orientation.

If participation includes Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT): According to the Federal Government and SAMHSA authority, MAT is a form of pharmacotherapy and refers to any treatment for a substance use disorder that includes a pharmacologic intervention as part of a comprehensive substance abuse treatment plan with an ultimate goal of Client recovery with full social function.

In the US, MAT has been demonstrated to be effective in the treatment of alcohol dependence with Food and Drug Administration approved drugs such as disulfiram; and opioid dependence with methadone and buprenorphine.

As part of a comprehensive treatment program, MAT has been shown to:

- Improve survival rate of those at risk of overdose
- Increase retention in treatment
- Decrease illicit opiate use
- Decrease hepatitis and HIV seroconversion
- Decrease criminal activities
- Increase employment
- Improve birth outcomes with perinatal addicts

TREATMENT OPTIONS

MAT OUTPATIENT

Buprenorphine is an opioid partial agonist. This means, like opioids, it produces effects such as euphoria or respiratory depression. With buprenorphine, these effects are weaker than those of full drugs such as heroin and methadone.

Naloxone is used to prevent overdose by opioids such as heroin, morphine, and oxycodone. It blocks opioid receptor sites, reversing the toxic effects of the overdose. Naloxone is administered when a Client is showing signs of opioid overdose.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you share and your experiences in treatment will remain confidential. No information about you will be released without your written consent. Before any information can be revealed to any individuals or agencies, you must submit a written consent/release which indicates what type of information can be revealed and to whom. If you are referred by Behavioral Health due to some involvement with the courts, you will need to sign a release for this program to share information with Probation, Family and Children Services or whoever is monitoring your case. Other instances where you may want Valley Health Associates Outpatient Services to disclose your participation in this program might include other treatment programs, school personnel, county agencies, or an emergency contact person. Written releases are dated to be effective for one year. You may rescind the release at any time.

Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records

The confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records maintained by this program is protected under the Federal Regulation 42 CFR Part 2. Generally, the program may not say to a person outside the program that a person attends the program or disclose any information identifying a patient as an alcohol or drug abuser unless:

1. The patient consents in writing
2. The disclosure is allowed by a court order and a subpoena.
3. The disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency or to qualified personnel for research, audit or program evaluations

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

For the agency to be in compliance with HIPAA, we are required to provide you with the following information. However, in most of these cases, federal regulation 42 CFR Part 2 would not allow us to use your private health information without your written consent.

The privacy of your protected health information (PHI) is protected under the federal HIPAA Privacy Rule. "Protected Health Information" is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment and healthcare operations: For example:

1. Treatment: We may use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.
2. Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide.
3. Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.
4. Patient contact: We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders or for required "call backs."
5. Required by law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you must give us written authorization to use and/or disclose your health information and patient records to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use of disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described above in this notice.

Violations of these Federal laws and regulations by a program are a crime. Suspected violations may be reported to appropriate authorities in accordance with Federal regulations. Federal laws and regulations do not protect any information about a crime committed by a patient either at the program or against any person who works for the program or about any threat to commit such a crime. Federal laws and regulations do not protect any information about suspected child abuse or neglect from

being reported under state law to appropriate state or local authorities.

PROGRAM INDIVIDUALS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Individual Rights: As an Outpatient Program client with Valley Health Associates, you have the right to:

- Be fully informed about the course of your care and decisions that may affect your treatment
- Revoke your consent for treatment at any time
- Timely and accurate information to assist you in making sound decisions about your treatment
- Be fully involved as an active participant in decisions pertaining to your treatment
- Have an individual identified in writing that will direct and coordinate your treatment
- Request a change in individual directing and coordinating our treatment, if you so desire
- To be accorded safe, healthful, accessible, and comfortable accommodations to meet his or her needs in an alcohol/drug free environment.
- Receive services in an environment that is free of all forms of abuse, including, but not limited to, (a) financial abuse, (b) physical abuse and punishment, (c) sexual abuse and exploitation, (d) psychological abuse including humiliation, neglect, retaliation, threats and exploitation, and (e) all forms of seclusion and restraint
- Have information about your treatment and your confidentiality protected to the greatest extent allowed by federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations
- File a grievance or complaint about the services you receive without fear of retaliation or reprisal of any sort
- Have family members, friends or others involved in your treatment with your consent and approval
- Receive services that comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations
- File a grievance with an outside third party if you feel that the organization has not satisfactorily addressed any concerns you have or, does not adequately address any formal grievance you submit
- To request a transfer to another program if you believe you are not receiving care that is meeting your needs and preferences.
- To be accorded access to your individual records relating to treatment at VHA, upon written request to the Associate Director
- You may also have additional rights afforded to you based on federal, state, and local regulations. Your service coordinator will advise you of any additional rights that you may have.
- The right to be accorded dignity in contact with staff, volunteers, board members and other persons.
- The right to be free from discrimination based on ethnic group identification, religion, age, gender, race, sexual orientation, or disability.
- The right to take medications prescribed by a licensed medical professional for medical, mental health, or substance use disorders.

Program Individual Responsibilities: As an Outpatient Program client with Valley Health Associates, you have the responsibility to:

- Refrain from all drug and alcohol use for the entire treatment program. If unable to fulfill this commitment, client will discuss other treatment options with the program staff and will discuss any drug or alcohol use during individual sessions or groups.
- Refrain from all forms of physical violence or abuse toward other program participants, staff, or visitors
- Refrain from abusive language, disruptive behavior or overt sexual conduct
- Refrain from texting or any form of cell phone use while in group
- Refrain from violating the confidentiality of other program participants
- Refrain from bringing or using any illicit (illegal) drug or alcohol on the organization's property
- Refrain from bringing any type of weapon into the organization's facilities or property
- Refrain from using tobacco, vaping, and other tobacco products on premises
- Refrain from loitering outside the organization's facilities
- Attend all services required by the organization to meet agreed upon goals
- Comply with Urinalysis standards
- Notify any outside treatment provider (Physician, case worker, counselor, etc.) of participation in services, should your treatment impact, or compromise, the provision of those services
- Treat other program participants, staff, and visitors in a respectable manner
- Do not wear clothing, jewelry, etc. that could be interpreted as "gang attire"

Participants may be discharged for failure to fulfill the above responsibilities.

PRESCRIPTIONS

All drugs prescribed by other physicians must be reported to our clinic staff as soon as possible. If you are required to obtain medical care away from the clinic, it is absolutely necessary that the physician treating you be informed that you are taking prescribed MAT medications. This is extremely important if you are scheduled for surgery. If you must use a prescription drug for any reasons, please follow these steps:

- Do not tamper with the prescription bottle or label in any way.
- Leave the medication in the original container.
- Bring the prescription and any new prescriptions to the attention of VHA staff.
- Unless the prescription medication is approved by the program, a positive urinalysis test resulting from the medication will not be excused.
- Do not take medications that were prescribed for someone else.

DRUG TESTING

The purpose of drug testing is to monitor a client's progress in treatment. Since specimens are randomly collected, each client should be prepared to give a urine specimen at each session. Once the Client is prompted to submit a urine analysis (UA), the client will be walked to the testing area by a staff member where the client will be provided with a urine specimen bottle. Leaving the building and/or failing to provide the required amount of urine will result in a "refusal" since state regulations

specify that the program must then assume that the Client is providing a “positive” test, meaning that there is an unauthorized presence of illicit drugs.

Testing is performed off site by National Labs which is licensed and certified by the State Department of Health Care Services. All results both negative and positive are sent directly to this office. If any test results show the presence of illicit drugs and/or the absence of prescribed MAT medication/or its metabolites, the client will be counseled and assessed per counselor. A client will not be discharged from VHA solely because of positive drug screens.

Substances to be tested or analyzed in the collected Client’s urine specimens include the following: methadone/buprenorphine and metabolites; heroin and other opiates including synthetic; cocaine; codeine; morphine; hydrocodone; hydromorphone; oxycodone; fentanyl; amphetamines; methamphetamines; benzodiazepines; THC; and ETG.

INTOXICATION

Clients who come to session under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs, WILL NOT be allowed to stay for the day. This is for your own health and safety. All necessary precautions will be taken by staff to ensure your safety and well-being.

VISITORS

Due to confidentiality requirements (VHA's Privacy Practices, and Federal Regulations), NO ONE other than our Clients will be allowed in the lobby or the immediate vicinity during business hours. We do, however, encourage family members to be supportive during your recovery from drug dependence. Individualized arrangements will be made by you counselor to accommodate their involvement during our regular business hours.

LOITERING

Loitering in and around the office is prohibited by law. Unless you have legitimate business in the office, you are expected to leave the office and area outside the office immediately after receiving services. Loitering before sessions is also prohibited.

OUTPATIENT PROGRAM COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Valley Health Associates has a multi-tiered complaint procedure for complaints and grievances. We hope that any problems can be resolved at the program level and encourage Outpatient participants to take any concerns or complaints to your counselor first. You are encouraged to use the grievance procedure you were given at intake and follow the chain of command listed below (a copy is also posted in the lobby):

1. If the problem cannot be resolved with your counselor, you may take it to the Associate Director of Youth Outpatient at (831) 424-6655 x11.
2. If the complaint remains unanswered after you speak to the Associate Director, you may take it to the Clinical Director, (831) 424-6655.
3. If the complaint remains unanswered after you speak to both the Associate Director and Clinical Director, you may speak with the Executive Director at (831) 424-6655 x 14.
4. If the issue cannot be resolved when you speak to the Executive Director, you may take it to the Monterey County AOD Program Administrator, Andy Heald at (831) 755-6383.
5. If the matter remains unresolved after you speak to the Monterey County AOD Program

Administrator, you may contact the California Department of Health Care Services at (916)-322-2911.

Persons served have the right to due process with regard to complaints and/or grievances, and the organization will afford every reasonable opportunity for informal and/or formal resolution of the grievance. If the problem or complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the person served, a formal grievance may be filed. Following the grievance procedure is particularly important if you feel you have been unable to informally resolve:

- Discriminatory actions
- Difficulty with your counselor or other staff
- Appeal of dismissal from the Outpatient program
- Denial of a fee waiver request

The steps to file a formal grievance are as follows:

1. Formal grievances shall be filed first with the Executive Director of VHA
2. Complaint/Grievance forms are available in the front lobby/waiting area and can be completed and submitted at any time.
3. The Executive Director of VHA will meet with the grievant, and/or representatives, immediately following the filing to brainstorm resolution of any related issues that may get in the way of full participation in services. Actions may include, but not be limited to, a change in direct care providers or an adjustment in programming schedules and/or program environments.
4. The organization will issue a formal written response to the grievant, and/or the designated representatives, within five working days, excluding weekends or holidays, of the complaint.

The steps to appeal a written response to a grievance:

1. If the grievant is unsatisfied with the findings of the written response to a grievance, he or she may appeal the decision of the director within five days, excluding weekends or holidays.
2. If the grievant is unsatisfied with the findings of the written response, he/she will be referred to a third party outside of the organization. Third parties may include organizations such as adult protective services, professional licensing boards, or other appropriate organizations that may serve as an advocate for the person served.

If you wish to file a grievance against any Valley Health Associates program, you may do so by contacting the following agencies:

Monterey County Behavioral Health Department
Director of Behavioral Health
Address: 1240 Natividad Road
Salinas, Ca. 93906
831-755-4509

Or you may contact the State of California Substance Use Disorder Services at:

Department of Health Care Services
Substance Use Disorder Services
PO BOX, 997413
MS# 2601

INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION & FAIR HEARING PROCESS

In accordance with Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations, “a Client has a right to a predetermination fair hearing in all cases of involuntary termination from the program for cause where continued participation in the program does not create a physically threatening situation for staff or other Clients.” A written Notice of Termination will be given to the Client by the program staff. This notice will include the following: reason for termination; requirement(s) for continuing in the program; effective date of the intended action to terminate services; Client’s right to pre-termination hearing before an impartial hearing officer; procedure for obtaining a fair hearing and having legal representation. If the Client is receiving Drug Medi-Cal benefits (Title 22) for their treatment, they will be advised in writing at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the effective date of the intended action to terminate or reduce services. This written notice shall include: action we intend to take; reason for the action; citation of the specific regulations supporting the intended action; and information for appealing the termination by requesting a fair hearing under Title 22. The Client must respond with a written notice to the program within 48 hours of receipt of termination notification in order to exercise his/her right to a predetermination hearing. The hearing will be scheduled within seven (7) working days from the time the Client requests the hearing. The hearing officer shall render a decision not later than the first working day following the hearing. A copy of the record of the proceedings and/or hearing decision shall be provided to the Client upon request. All related materials will be retained for one year.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (World Health Organization, 2019)

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) that most often affect the lungs. Tuberculosis is curable and preventable.

TB is spread from person to person through the air. When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air. A person needs to inhale only a few of these germs to become infected.

About one-quarter of the world's population has latent TB, which means people have been infected by TB bacteria but are not (yet) ill with the disease and cannot transmit the disease.

People infected with TB bacteria have a 5–15% lifetime risk of falling ill with TB. Persons with compromised immune systems, such as people living with HIV, malnutrition or diabetes, or people who use tobacco, have a higher risk of falling ill.

When a person develops active TB disease, the symptoms (such as cough, fever, night sweats, or weight loss) may be mild for many months. This can lead to delays in seeking care, and results in transmission of the bacteria to others. People with active TB can infect 5–15 other people through close contact over the course of a year. Without proper treatment, 45% of HIV-negative people with TB on average and nearly all HIV-positive people with TB will die.

Doctors usually find latent TB by doing a tuberculin skin test. During the skin test, a doctor or nurse will inject the TB antigens under your skin. If you have TB bacteria in your body, within 2 days you will get a red bump where the needle went into your skin. The test can’t tell when you became infected with TB or if it can be spread to others. To find pulmonary TB, doctors test a sample of mucus from the lungs to see if there are TB bacteria in it. Doctors sometimes take a chest X-ray to help find

pulmonary TB.

Who is most at risk?

Tuberculosis mostly affects adults in their most productive years. However, all age groups are at risk. Over 95% of cases and deaths are in developing countries. People who are infected with HIV are 19 times more likely to develop active TB (see TB and HIV section b). The risk of active TB is also greater in persons suffering from other conditions that impair the immune system. People with undernutrition are 3 times more at risk. There were globally 2.3 million new TB cases in 2018 that were attributable to undernutrition. 1.1 million children (0–14 years of age) fell ill with TB, and 230 000 children (including children with HIV associated TB) died from the disease in 2018.

Alcohol use disorder and tobacco smoking increase the risk of TB disease by a factor of 3.3 and 1.6, respectively. In 2018, 0.83 million new TB cases worldwide were attributable to alcohol use disorder and 0.86 million were attributable to smoking.

Treatment

TB is a treatable and curable disease. Active, drug-susceptible TB disease is treated with a standard 6-month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs that are provided with information and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer. Without such support, treatment adherence is more difficult.

Between 2000 and 2018, an estimated 58 million lives were saved through TB diagnosis and treatment.

HIV/AIDS (World Health Organization, 2019)

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) targets the immune system and weakens people's defense systems against infections and some types of cancer. As the virus destroys and impairs the function of immune cells, infected individuals gradually become immunodeficient. Immune function is typically measured by CD4 cell count. Immunodeficiency results in increased susceptibility to a wide range of infections, cancers and other diseases that people with healthy immune systems can fight off. The most advanced stage of HIV infection is acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), which can take from 2 to 15 years to develop if not treated, depending on the individual. AIDS is defined by the development of certain cancers, infections or other severe clinical manifestations.

Signs and symptoms

The symptoms of HIV vary depending on the stage of infection. Though people living with HIV tend to be most infectious in the first few months after being infected, many are unaware of their status until the later stages. In the first few weeks after initial infection people may experience no symptoms or an influenza-like illness including fever, headache, rash or sore throat.

As the infection progressively weakens the immune system, they can develop other signs and symptoms, such as swollen lymph nodes, weight loss, fever, diarrhea and cough. Without treatment, they could also develop severe illnesses such as tuberculosis (TB), cryptococcal meningitis, severe bacterial infections, and cancers such as lymphomas and Kaposi's sarcoma.

Who is most at risk?

Many people who become infected with HIV/AIDS are heroin, cocaine, or speed users who use needles to shoot (inject) drugs. Sharing needles passes the HIV virus directly from the bloodstream of one person to another. Behaviors and conditions that put individuals at greater risk of contracting HIV include:

- Having unprotected anal or vaginal sex;
- Having another sexually transmitted infection (STI) such as syphilis, herpes, chlamydia,

gonorrhoea and bacterial vaginosis;

- Sharing contaminated needles, syringes and other injecting equipment and drug solutions when injecting drugs;
- Receiving unsafe injections, blood transfusions and tissue transplantation, and medical procedures that involve unsterile cutting or piercing; or accidental needle stick injuries, including among health workers

Harm Reduction for people who inject and use drugs

People who inject drugs can take precautions against becoming infected with HIV by using sterile injecting equipment (including needles and syringes) for each injection, and not sharing drug-using equipment and drug solutions. Treatment of drug dependence, in particular, opioid substitution therapy for people dependent on opioids, also helps to reduce the risk of HIV transmission and supports adherence to

HIV treatment. A comprehensive package of HIV prevention and treatment interventions for people who inject drugs includes:

- Needle and syringe programs
- Opioid substitution therapy for people dependent on opioids, and other evidence based drug dependence treatment
- HIV testing and counselling
- HIV treatment and care
- Risk-reduction information and education, and provision of naloxone to prevent opioid overdose;
- Access to condoms; and management of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), TB and viral hepatitis.

Treatment

HIV can be suppressed by combination Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) consisting of 3 or more ART drugs. ART does not cure HIV infection but suppresses viral replication within a person's body and allows an individual's immune system to strengthen and regain the capacity to fight off infections.

In 2016, the World Health Organization recommended that all people living with HIV be provided with lifelong ART, including children, adolescents and adults, and pregnant and breastfeeding women, regardless of clinical status or CD4 cell count. By mid-2019, 182 countries had already adopted this recommendation, covering 99% of all people living with HIV globally.

HEPATITIS C (World Health Organization, 2019)

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes both acute and chronic infection. New HCV infections are usually asymptomatic. Some persons get acute hepatitis which does not lead to a life threatening disease. Around 30% (15–45%) of infected persons spontaneously clear the virus within 6 months of infection without any treatment.

The remaining 70% (55–85%) of persons will develop chronic HCV infection. Of those with chronic HCV infection, the risk of cirrhosis ranges between 15% and 30% within 20 years.

The hepatitis C virus is a bloodborne virus. It is most commonly transmitted through:

- Injecting drug use through the sharing of injection equipment;
- The reuse or inadequate sterilization of medical equipment, especially syringes and needles in healthcare settings;
- The transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products;

- Sexual practices that lead to exposure to blood (for example, among men who have sex with men, particularly those with HIV infection or those taking pre-exposure prophylaxis against HIV infection).

HCV can also be transmitted sexually and can be passed from an infected mother to her baby; however, these modes of transmission are less common.

Hepatitis C is not spread through breast milk, food, water or casual contact such as hugging, kissing and sharing food or drinks with an infected person.

Treatment

A new infection with HCV does not always require treatment, as the immune response in some people will clear the infection. However, when HCV infection becomes chronic, treatment is necessary. The goal of hepatitis C treatment is cure. Please follow-up with a medical provider for treatment options.

ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS AND PREGNANCY

The use of alcohol and other drugs, even coffee, cigarettes, and aspirin can affect the developing fetus during pregnancy. The following is a list of what some of these drugs can do to the developing fetus.

ALCOHOL: Even in small quantities alcohol can cause low birth weight. Regular use can cause small head, body, brain, heart and liver damage, deformed face and limbs, and addiction and withdrawal at birth.

CAFFEINE: (Coffee, Soda) in excess, caffeine can cause miscarriage or birth defects.

COCAINE: Whether snorted, smoked, or injected, cocaine can cause miscarriages, low birth weight, small head and body, with damage to eyes, heart, and kidneys, and the child may be born addicted with a chance of death soon after birth from complications resulting from withdrawal.

HEROIN: Whether you have a one or a five – bag habit, heroin can result in low birth weight, small head and body, addiction and death at birth from complications of withdrawal.

MARIJUANA: Regular use can result in stillbirth, low birth weight, small head and body, and damage to heart and nervous system.

PCP: This drug causes brain damage and damage to eyes and ears. These children often have behavioral problems.

AMPHETAMINE: (METH, Crank) Regardless of how these drugs are ingested (snorted, smoked, injected) they can result in low birth weight, small head and body, addiction and withdrawal at birth and behavioral problems.

ANY DRUG TAKEN DURING PREGNANCY: (and certain food supplements like vitamins) can have detrimental effects on our child both in the womb and after birth. It is important to talk with your primary care provider about any prescription or over-the-counter drugs you may be taking while pregnant.

PRENATAL CARE

The best way to take care of your child is to have regular checkups during your pregnancy. For further information on taking care of yourself and your unborn child, call the Family Helpline at 1-800-339-8228

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN WIC is a program that provides nutritional education and supplemental food vouchers to help maintain healthy pregnant or breastfeeding mothers, infants, and young children under the age of five years. For more information:

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)

632 E. Alisal Street
Salinas, CA. 93905
831-796-2888

HEALTH CARE FOR INFANTS THROUGH YOUNG ADULTS

If you already have children, and would like information on free health and dental checkups, contact:

Monterey County Health Department
1270 Natividad Road
Salinas, CA. 93906
831-755-4500

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS EVERYBODY GOING TO KNOW MY BUSINESS?

Everyone, staff and clients, are responsible to maintain the confidentiality of other clients. Do not reveal who you see here or what you hear here. Discussing another client is even against the Law. Written information about Confidentiality can be reviewed in the documents "Consent to Treatment" and "Release of Information".

HOW LONG IS THE PROGRAM?

Our program begins with an Intake Interview and a session of Treatment Planning. Clients then participate in 26 sessions prior to completing the program.

WHAT IS THE DRESS POLICY AT THE PROGRAM?

Do not wear clothing that could be interpreted as "gang" attire. This means anything that could be seen as a signal that you are gang affiliated. This includes slogans, numbers, symbols, colors, sports attire or whatever are current gang signals. If staff has questions about your clothing, you will be asked to cover yourself with a large shirt or in some way alter what you are wearing. Or you may be asked to leave for the day. People wearing sexually provocative attire, by staff standards, will be asked to cover up or asked to leave for the day.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS A SESSION?

If you are going to miss, call the office at 424-6655 and tell us why you are not coming. Missing sessions for whatever reason is not a good thing. You will not get credit for the session if you are not there. Under no circumstance will you get credit. If you call, we will document your reason in a log as part of our records. If you were referred by a Probation Officer, Employer or Social Worker, call them and inform them, also. If you miss a session, continue attending until all sessions are completed.

WILL YOU EXCUSE MY ABSENCE IF I HAVE A GOOD REASON?

There is no "good reason" to miss program. Valley Health Associates does not "excuse" or "not excuse" absences. BUT REMEMBER- If you attend every session, you will be finished sooner, and you will benefit more from the services offered in the Outpatient Program. Attending all sessions on a monthly basis will earn you a special certificate. All participants must complete program prior to six months after starting the program.

WHAT IF I AM LATE?

BE ON TIME FOR ALL SESSIONS. Clients may be late up to 10 minutes after the official start time. One second past that - is too late to participate. Don't ask. Our clocks are considered the "correct" time.

CAN I PAY MY FEES IN CASH?

Most clients have some sort of Fees or Co pay. Fees/Co pay must be paid in the form of Money Orders, Cashier Checks, Debit Card or Credit Card. You can buy these at Banks or some grocery stores. We cannot accept cash or personal checks.

PROGRAM COMPLETION

A client “completes” the program, they do not “graduate” the program. This is due to the variation in program length. A client can also transition to recovery services (see recovery services).

At this time all clients who have completed their minimum of required groups will receive either a certificate or a letter stating they have completed that number of groups. That certificate or letter is the only official recognition of program completion.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Closed for lunch 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Saturday, Sunday, Holidays CLOSED

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Clinic Phone Number (831) 424-6655
Natividad Hospital (831) 755-4111
Salinas Valley Memorial (831) 757-4333
Emergencies 911
After Hours Support (831) 424-6655 Ext 55