

# Focus on Behavioral Health

A PUBLICATION of ZUCKER HILLSIDE HOSPITAL and SOUTH OAKS HOSPITAL + NORTHWELL.EDU

VOLUME 1  
2017

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# Addressing the OPIOID CRISIS

Equipping health care providers, patients, families and community partners to fight a daunting epidemic.

**Opioid abuse continues** its scourge in metro New York, and behavioral health care providers at South Oaks Hospital and Zucker Hillside Hospital are on the front lines.

“The demand for substance-abuse services is skyrocketing, and a large driver of that is the opioid-abuse problem,” said Bruce Goldman, LCSW, director of substance-abuse services at Zucker Hillside. He added that Zucker Hillside’s patient population clearly reflects the epidemic. “I’ve been in this field for many years, and I’ve never seen so many sudden, tragic deaths of otherwise healthy, young, productive people.”

Zucker Hillside treats about 1,200 outpatients for substance-use disorders at any given time. Whereas most patients previously needed care for cannabis, cocaine or alcohol issues, Mr. Goldman said, more now seek help for opioid abuse.

South Oaks has experienced similar shifts. “We see at least 100 patients a month,” said Jean Jackson, administrative director of substance-use disorders at South Oaks. “Of those 100, I estimate that 85 percent or more have opioid issues.”

### Lifesaving Resources

Both hospitals offer inpatient and outpatient services that address the problem, including medication-based and psychosocial therapies. In addition, South Oaks and Zucker Hillside distribute Narcan kits throughout Long Island and Queens to curb the rising number of overdose deaths.

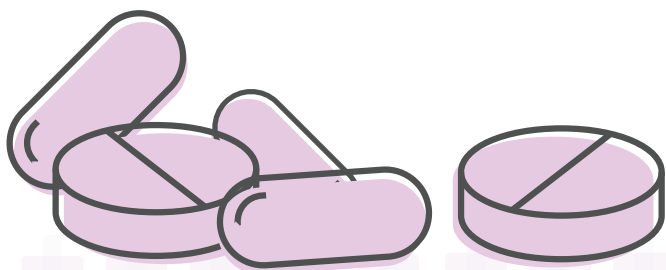
An opioid antagonist, Narcan (naloxone) immediately halts an overdose. Each kit contains two premeasured doses of the intranasal spray and two atomizers. In case of overdose, quick administration of the drug can mean the difference between life and death.

Narcan has few associated side effects, and allergic reactions are rare, so it is safe for anyone who needs it.

South Oaks and Zucker Hillside teams who provide Narcan coaching to community groups recommend that clinicians, law enforcement and loved ones watch for signs of overdose.

“Any changes in a person’s behavior or level of consciousness — like lethargy, physical coordination, or decreased or irregular breathing patterns — would warrant the administration of Narcan. Better to be safe than sorry,” Ms. Jackson said. “Even if the symptoms aren’t related to opioid overdose, Narcan is not harmful.”

The Zucker Hillside and South Oaks teams have distributed more than 1,100 effective Narcan kits, despite a recent manufacturer recall. Both hospitals supply kits and training to all patients receiving care for opioid-use disorder. The hospitals participate in community health fairs, and South Oaks offers monthly community Narcan training on its campus. Loved ones commonly receive kits, too. Anyone is eligible.



*“I’ve been in this field for many years, and I’ve never seen so many sudden, tragic deaths of otherwise healthy, young, productive people.”*

— BRUCE GOLDMAN, LCSW

### Enlisting Emergency Departments

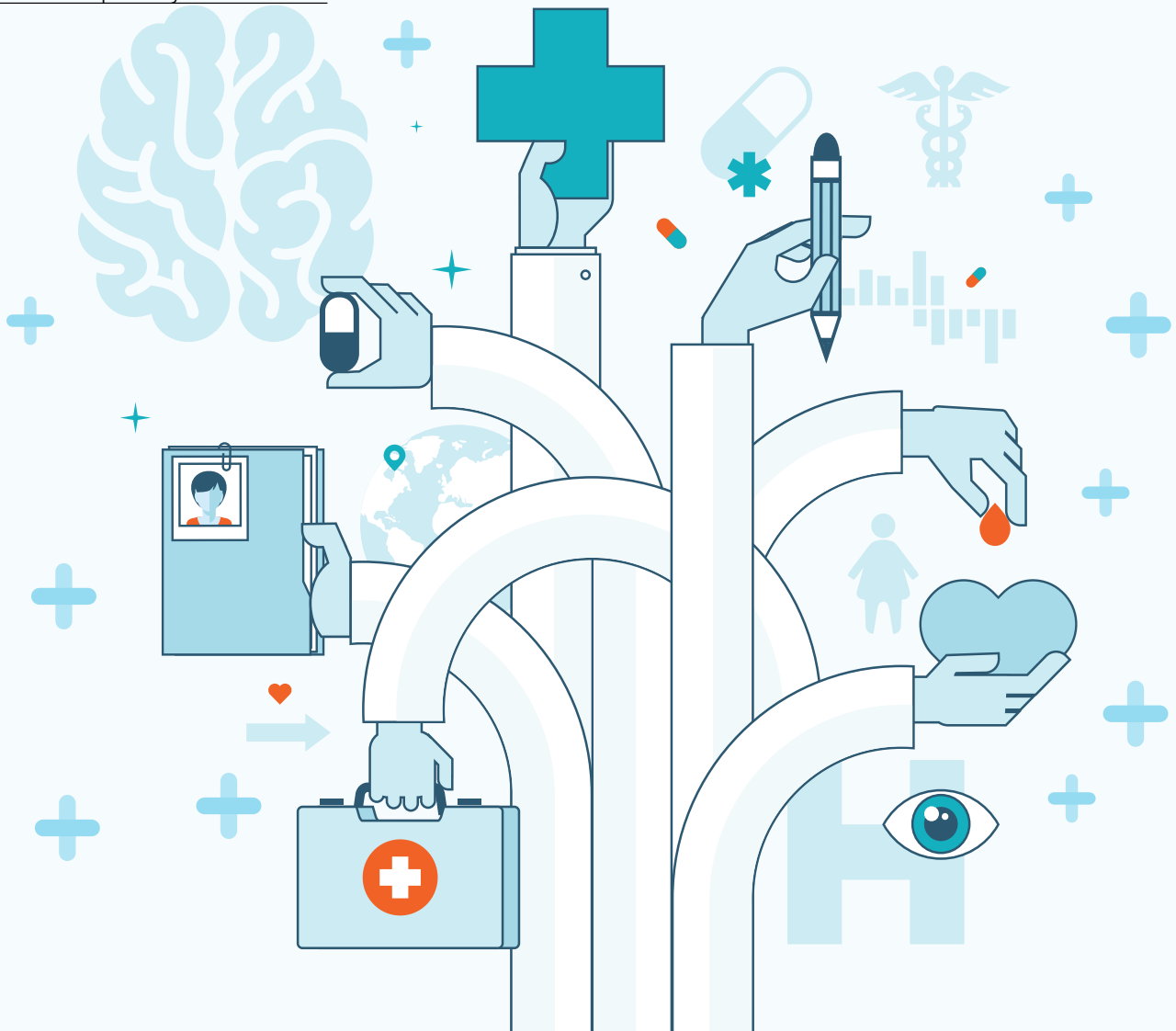
Besides assisting at-risk patients and those close to them, Northwell’s Naloxone Saturation Campaign provides kits and training to patients who present with opioid overdose at the emergency departments (ED) of Southside Hospital, Staten Island University Hospital North and Staten Island University Hospital South. Forty days after the campaign launched, one ED had already distributed 86 kits.

“Trainers have rallied the community to talk about this issue and work together to help solve the epidemic,” Mr. Goldman said. “Staff members in our addiction-recovery program have also spoken with families who’ve received kits and encountered emergencies where they needed to administer Narcan to a loved one. As a result, they saved their loved ones’ lives.”

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For more information about our outpatient chemical-dependency and substance-abuse programs, call South Oaks Hospital at **631-608-5028** or Zucker Hillside Hospital at **718-470-8950**.

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## COLLABORATIVE CARE **IN ACTION**

Patients benefit when behavioral health care pros develop solutions together.

“No one knows our patients or their needs better than the people who work with them every day,” said Mitch Shuwall, PhD, executive director of Zucker Hillside Hospital. Through the collaborative care model, frontline Zucker Hillside employees can identify opportunities to improve outcomes and create projects to make them happen.

For example, the 2 North collaborative care council (CCC) created a screening tool to build rapport and trust between staff members and patients with major depressive disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder.

Staff members use the *I Am Unique* questionnaire to invite patients to share facets of their lives and personalities beyond their psychiatric conditions — specifically, hobbies, pets, family and other interests. Team members then use the information to personalize care, which has reduced patients’ violent behavior and increased their likelihood to recommend the hospital to others who may need care.

“Collaborative care councils create an environment that empowers staff members to get involved and experience the impacts of their efforts,” said Dr. Shuwall.

### The Way Forward

Each Zucker Hillside department’s council meets monthly to plan and implement projects that improve the patient experience. Councils highlight their projects and results during an annual expo, and attendees choose the top three ideas for implementation throughout the facility.

“Behavioral health care is a team sport,” said Marybeth McManus, RN, associate executive director of patient care services at Zucker Hillside. “CCCs influence the success of our entire organization.”

For example, CCCs spurred a broader project to convert seclusion rooms into comfort rooms for patients, Ms. McManus noted. “This year, we want to conduct a multisite study at Zucker Hillside and Northern Westchester Hospital to see how comfort rooms affect patient satisfaction, the use of PRN medications and patients’ self-assessed anxiety levels.”

## Recent Initiatives

Inspired by CCC success, other Northwell Health hospitals are adopting the model. Zucker Hillside Hospital’s recent CCC Expo attracted 150 attendees, including councils from Northwell behavioral health sites such as South Oaks Hospital, Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Valley Stream and Staten Island University Hospital. Notable initiatives included:

**Zucker Hillside Low 5:** A nursing comfort cart facilitates patients’ engagement and encourages their participation in relaxation activities on this geriatric unit. A new brochure now helps patients acclimate to the unit, and rehabilitation projects, such as gardening and chair exercises, give patients variety.

**Zucker Hillside Low 3: *So Fresh, So Clean*** promotes self-care and autonomy among patients with bipolar disorder, chronic depression and personality disorders that can sometimes contribute to poor hygiene. Council members collaborated with a Zucker Hillside cosmetologist to offer a spa-like experience complemented with bath and body products.

**Zucker Hillside 2 West: *Turn Down the Noise*** enhances a healing, therapeutic environment. Patients benefit from the addition of a daily hour-long quiet period and are encouraged to participate in an evening meditation session. Modifications to the nursing station doors prevent slamming, also enhancing the quietude.

**LIJ Valley Stream 2B:** Leadership rounding creates more one-on-one time with patients, and educational staff meetings increase employee engagement. (Such initiatives may influence why the unit has received Press Ganey’s Guardian of Excellence Award for patient satisfaction for the fourth consecutive year.)

**Mineola Community Treatment Center:** Open-access patient intake has decreased wait times and promoted patients’ follow-up with treatment. Patients receive appointment offers 24 to 48 hours after their initial phone calls and can access walk-in times three days a week.



# Whole-Teen Healing

Partial hospitalization helps young patients transition back to daily life.

**A teen's behavioral** or mental health condition may be impossible to manage without help from a behavioral health institution. South Oaks Hospital's Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program provides intensive psychiatric treatment while letting patients keep their roots in the community.

"We bridge the gap between inpatient care and everyday life with a structured environment where we address conflicts and provide education on coping," said Harsimran Brar, MD, child psychiatrist with the program. "We provide a crucial buffer during a very sensitive stage."

A typical day can involve a schedule filled with educational group work and therapist- and social-worker-led activity or dialectical behavior therapy, depending on the behavioral issue.

"Adolescent behavioral challenges vary based on background," Dr. Brar said. "Our specialists address issues such as self-harm, truancy and substance abuse."

Individualized treatment plans involve the patient's family and school, and medication may play a part in the spectrum of support.

"Our goal is to decrease the need for hospitalization and address home or school triggers that contribute to ongoing issues," said Kenneth Corbin, LCSW, South Oaks' administrative director of child and adolescent services. "Dysfunctional family issues combined with illness will always require inpatient treatment for some kids, but consistent therapy and medication help prevent readmissions for most of our patients. That's what Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program practitioners emphasize to patients, families and physicians. Everyone has to be on board."

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The Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program is open to patients 13 to 18 years old, within a 20-mile radius of South Oaks Hospital. The program is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with evening counseling sessions available when family work schedules require them. Transportation is provided for those living within the catchment area. It is Northwell Health's only such program, and one of only two in the New York metro region. Call **631-608-5685** to make a referral.

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## Support for Visitors

The new **Circle** of Caring Program helps the loved ones of Zucker Hillside Hospital inpatients.

“Most of our programs address patient safety and experiences,” said Marybeth McManus, RN, associate executive director of patient care services at Zucker Hillside. “Circle of Caring is different because it focuses on patients’ friends and families.”

During Wednesday night visiting hours, Zucker Hillside staff members greet guests, offer support and provide helpful resources, such as material from the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

The encounters help visitors navigate an often unfamiliar situation.

“Visiting a behavioral health facility — especially for the first time — can be a frightening and emotional experience,” Ms. McManus said. “Having someone who can answer questions over a cup of coffee can make all the difference.”

Frequent guests often express gratitude for the new program, Ms. McManus added. “It offers comfort and hope during some of the most difficult times of their lives.”

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Learn about Zucker Hillside’s services at [bit.ly/zhh2017](http://bit.ly/zhh2017).

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## Customized Learning for Geriatric Care

Zucker Hillside Hospital is the first freestanding psychiatric hospital accepted into Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders (NICHE).

Due to a variety of factors — such as physical frailty, comorbidities or dementia — geriatric patients often have special needs, and NICHE professional-development courses focus on addressing those needs and improving the outcomes for patients by decreasing the number of incidents and setbacks.

“We have two inpatient geriatric psychiatry units,” said Kristy Loewenstein, RN, Zucker Hillside’s director of nursing education and professional development and co-director of the hospital’s NICHE program. “That’s uncommon, and a real community asset.”

Courses range from an introduction to gerontology, which requires a five-hour commitment, to geriatric resource nurse (GRN) training, which requires 21 hours. Staff members who work in both geriatric units have time to complete their modules during the workday, for the purpose of getting everyone trained by the end of the first quarter of 2017.

Zucker Hillside’s practitioners extend the benefits of their learning to the community. For instance, they share best practices for transitioning patients from inpatient to outpatient care with representatives from local geriatric outpatient programs and skilled nursing facilities.

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For insight from NICHE-designated geriatric resource nurses, call **718-470-8000**.

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NORTHWELL HEALTH  
Zucker Hillside Hospital  
75-59 263rd Street Glen Oaks, NY 11004

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**MICHAEL DOWLING**  
President and CEO,  
Northwell Health

**JOHN KANE, MD**  
Senior Vice President,  
Behavioral Health  
Services  
Northwell Health

**MITCHELL SHUWALL, PhD**  
Executive Director,  
Zucker Hillside Hospital



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Executive Director,  
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(South Oaks Hospital and  
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Director, Editorial  
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*Focus on Behavioral Health* is published by Northwell Health's Public Relations Department (616-321-6701). The information within this publication is intended to educate readers and is not meant to be a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. Produced by True North Custom, Chattanooga, TN. © 2017. Printed in USA.

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## Free Support Groups

**At South Oaks.** *In the campus auditorium* — Mondays, 6 p.m., Young People's Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Wednesdays, 6 p.m., Family Bridging the Gap and 7 p.m., Families Anonymous. Thursdays, 8 p.m., Young People's AA. Fridays, 7:30 p.m., AA. The first Thursday of the month, 8 p.m., Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon. *In Carone Hall* — Tuesdays, 7:15 p.m., Nar-Anon for Beginners in Room 002; 8 p.m., Nar-Anon in Room 002; and 8 p.m., Cocaine Anonymous in Room 004A. Call **631-608-5028** for more information.

**At Zucker Hillside Hospital.** Mondays, 11 a.m., dementia caregiver support group in the Ambulatory Care Pavilion.

Call Barbara Vogel at **718-470-8447** for more information. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., Consumer Support Network meetings for Zucker Hillside patients. Call Vivian Weiser at **718-470-8244** for additional information.

The Queens/Nassau chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) holds ongoing meetings on the Zucker Hillside campus. The third Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., NAMI support group, 7:30 p.m., NAMI general meeting in the Sloman Auditorium. The first and third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., NAMI bipolar disorder group in the Kaufman Building. For more information, call **718-470-8250**.

## Brain Building

The Zucker Hillside Hospital offers professional education for social workers and others in the mental health field. The events below take place in the Sloman Auditorium.

- **April 24, 1 to 2:15 p.m.:** Social Media, Mobile Technology and Mental Health: A Review of the Research and Strategies for Coping. One contact hour, \$35.
- **May 22, 1 to 2:15 p.m.:** Dialectical Behavior Therapy: Skills Overview. One contact hour, \$35.
- **June 6, 8:30 to 11 a.m.:** Enhancing Motivation to Address Substance Use. Breakfast/registration 8:30 to 9 a.m., program 9 to 11 a.m. Two contact hours, \$70.
- **June 26, 1 to 2:15 p.m.:** Couples in Addiction: A Family Affair. One contact hour, \$35.

All participants receive certificates of completion at the end of each course. To register or see more details, visit [bit.ly/zhh-ed](http://bit.ly/zhh-ed). The New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work approves Zucker Hillside as a provider of continuing education for licensed social workers.

South Oaks Hospital's programs include:

- **May 3:** The 19th Annual Disability Awareness Conference. The Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine cosponsors the daylong event, which is open to all and takes place in the school auditorium. The conference includes breakfast and lunch, and attendance is free, but preregistration is required. To reserve your space, send your name, email, phone number and organization name/address to [vcunningham2@northwell.edu](mailto:vcunningham2@northwell.edu), or fax the information to **631-608-5707**. CRC credits available.
- **Year-round:** The outdoor Challenge Activities Ropes Experience (CARE) provides team-building and personal-development workshops. Project CARE helps children build self-esteem, and Corporate CARE focuses on business-relevant exercises. Courses promote cooperation, conflict-resolution, leadership, time-management and communication skills. Call **631-608-5342** to learn more.