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OLYMPIC MEDICAL CENTER

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## Coming Together AS A COMMUNITY

The North Olympic Peninsula's response to the opioid crisis is a collaborative approach.



Chris Frank, MD

**THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC** has affected the North Olympic Peninsula significantly. To address this crisis, local health and community leaders have stepped forward to create a collaborative plan geared toward reducing opioid abuse in the community.

"Our plan has three main goals: improve prescribing practices among physicians and dentists, increase access to evidence-based treatment for opioid abuse, and expand distribution of naloxone – a medication that blocks the effects of opioids during an overdose," says Chris Frank, MD, PhD,

Clallam County health officer and family medicine physician. "We've also been working to make sure physicians and their teams understand how to access the prescription monitoring program [PMP]."

The PMP is a database, accessible by physicians and other advanced practice clinicians, and a resource that allows users to view a patient's prescriptions—including those prescribed by other medical providers. It's an effective way to cut down on "doctor shopping," the practice of a patient visiting several physicians to get multiple prescriptions for controlled substances, according to Dr. Frank.

When people struggle with severe opioid use, some may transition to IV drug use, particularly heroin, because it's cheaper and sometimes

easier to obtain. This forced the need for a syringe-exchange program – established by Clallam County Health and Human Services – to cut down on the risk of

transmitting HIV and hepatitis C and lower the risk of dirty needles in the community.

### A COORDINATED RESPONSE

The Three-County Coordinated Opioid Response Project (3CCORP) is a collaboration between mental health providers, primary care providers, local emergency departments, first responders and many more. It is designed as a collaborative effort to support local opioid education and to put into practice the three goals previously outlined by Dr. Frank.



To learn more about the Three-County Coordinated Opioid Response Project, visit [www.olympicch.org/opioid-response-project.html](http://www.olympicch.org/opioid-response-project.html).



## CLOSE TO HOME

Clallam County has one of the highest opioid overdose death and hospitalization rates in Washington state. As a result, at the end of 2015, it was the first county in the state to make fatal and nonfatal opioid overdoses a reportable condition to the health department.

“It’s a widespread enough problem that almost everyone has some personal experience with a friend, family member or colleague who’s struggled with an opioid use disorder,” says Chris Frank, MD, PhD, Clallam County health officer and family medicine physician. “It’s created a complicated problem that requires a coordinated community response. There’s no simple answer, but if we continue to make improvements in prescribing practices and expanding treatment options, we can cut down on the number of new people diagnosed with opioid use disorders.”

**The Port Angeles Citizens Action Network (PACan) is dedicated to solving the opioid crisis in the community. Learn how the organization is making an immediate difference.**

**WHEN THE EXECUTIVE** Director of PACan, Angie Gooding, returned to her hometown of Port Angeles as a school teacher, she wanted to do something to help local young people who were abusing drugs and alcohol. Gooding began meeting with a group of 40 other concerned community members to brainstorm solutions for the growing problem. PACan, a nonprofit organization that collaborates with other local organizations to address addiction, is the result of those meetings. The nonprofit serves the community by:

- Hosting forums on educational topics, such as what to do if you find a needle in a public place
- Placing interventionists in schools to help students who are struggling with or at risk for addiction
- Supporting Port Angeles’ six Oxford

Houses, which are recovery homes for people who have completed treatment and are transitioning back into the community

- Partnering with the Port Angeles Police Department to help ensure community members are referred to recovery programs
  - Co-sponsoring the 2017 Port Angeles International Overdose Awareness Day Walk
  - Providing a forum for people to share personal addiction stories
- “PACan seeks to bring people together to better understand addiction and its root causes,” Gooding says. “We focus on addiction prevention and education. We want to present information in a hopeful way so people feel encouraged to seek help and turn their lives around.”

**For more information about PACan’s community outreach, email [PortAngelesCan@gmail.com](mailto:PortAngelesCan@gmail.com).**

# Journey Through Opioid Addiction

**Our bodies are naturally responsive to drugs that dull pain after surgery. These good feelings are sometimes difficult to give up, which can lead to opioid addiction.**

**OPIOIDS MIMIC THE** body's painkilling and pleasure-inducing chemicals – endorphins, which are released when we laugh, exercise or eat a piece of chocolate.

Over the last decade, many opioid-related deaths have happened locally – many unintentionally – as a result of people taking prescriptions longer than necessary or taking prescriptions that have gone unused by someone else, says Joshua Jones, MD, board-certified general and forensic psychiatrist and chief physician officer at Olympic Medical Physicians.

Anyone who takes opioids for more than the recommended time can develop a physical tolerance, meaning they will need to take more of the drug to feel the same effect as before.

“When this happens, bodies becomes dependent on the drug, and people feel sick, physically, without it,” says Chris Frank, MD, PhD, Clallam County health officer and family medicine physician. “During withdrawal, people experience terrible flu-like symptoms, which makes them feel like they have to have another dose.”

Withdrawal symptoms can include sweating, nausea and vomiting and can be treated by taking more opioids, which can lead to intense cravings and compulsions for some people.

## **ADDICTION AND NEXT STEPS**

“Opioids become the key to subduing these cravings, and people get hooked on them,” Dr. Frank says. “If this happens to you, speak with your primary care provider about treatment options.”

“Our job is to safely and appropriately help patients manage their pain,” Dr. Jones says. “And we will continue to do just that while being a resource for those who need help managing or weaning off opioids.”

In regard to the big picture about prescribing opioids: The solution isn't to get rid of them altogether, since they do a good job of treating acute pain, but to find a better way to use these medications safely, Dr. Frank says.



Joshua Jones, MD

## **PRIMARY CARE TO THE RESCUE**

For some people, ceasing to take prescription pain medications is not as simple as weaning themselves off the medication or going cold turkey.

A new program provided by Olympic Medical Physicians gives existing patients access to an opioid-based medicine known as suboxone to manage opioid use disorder. Other medications, such as long-acting injectable Vivitrol, may be useful as well. Patients also have access to mental health resources to work on underlying issues that make them more prone to relapse.

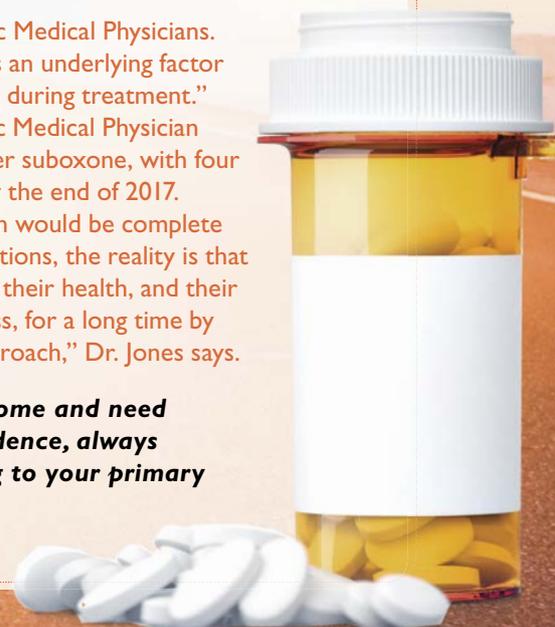
“For example, a person with major depressive disorder might find some relief by numbing out with opioids,” says Joshua Jones, MD, board-certified general and forensic psychiatrist and chief

physician officer at Olympic Medical Physicians. “So, depression for them is an underlying factor that needs to be addressed during treatment.”

Currently, three Olympic Medical Physician primary care providers offer suboxone, with four more scheduled to start by the end of 2017.

“While the ideal situation would be complete independence from medications, the reality is that many patients can improve their health, and their social and economic success, for a long time by using a medicine-based approach,” Dr. Jones says.

***If you have a medical home and need help with opioid dependence, always feel comfortable talking to your primary care provider.***





**Opioid dependence is not the same as addiction.**

# Dependence vs. Addiction: Knowing the Difference

**THE TERMS DEPENDENCE** and *addiction* may seem like two sides of the same coin, but the truth is they differ from each other as much as a quarter differs from a penny.

“Physical dependence to opioids can occur without turning into addiction,” says Michele Stafford, DO, primary care physician at Olympic Medical Physicians. “Dependence isn’t unique to opioids. Substances like caffeine and nicotine can cause physical dependence.”

## DEPENDENCE

Opioid dependence results from the regular use of opioids, even for a short amount of time. When regular opioid use is abruptly stopped, it can result in withdrawal symptoms, including nausea, irritability, restlessness, diarrhea, rapid pulse, chills and flushed skin.

“Dependence on any substance is treated by slowly tapering its use so withdrawal symptoms don’t occur,” Dr. Stafford says. “Whenever we plan to discontinue opioid medication for a patient who is experiencing dependence, we plan to do it slowly, over a certain period of time.”

If you’ve ever tried weaning yourself off of caffeine to limit headaches or irritability, you’ve employed the same method. Additional medications can also be used to treat

withdrawal symptoms as patients are taken off opioids.

## ADDICTION

Opioid addiction is defined by uncontrollable cravings and the inability to control opioid use, regardless of the harm it may do to oneself or others. This can result in an ongoing state of intoxication or impairment, as well as permanent medical complications. Other effects may include apathy, depression and anxiety.

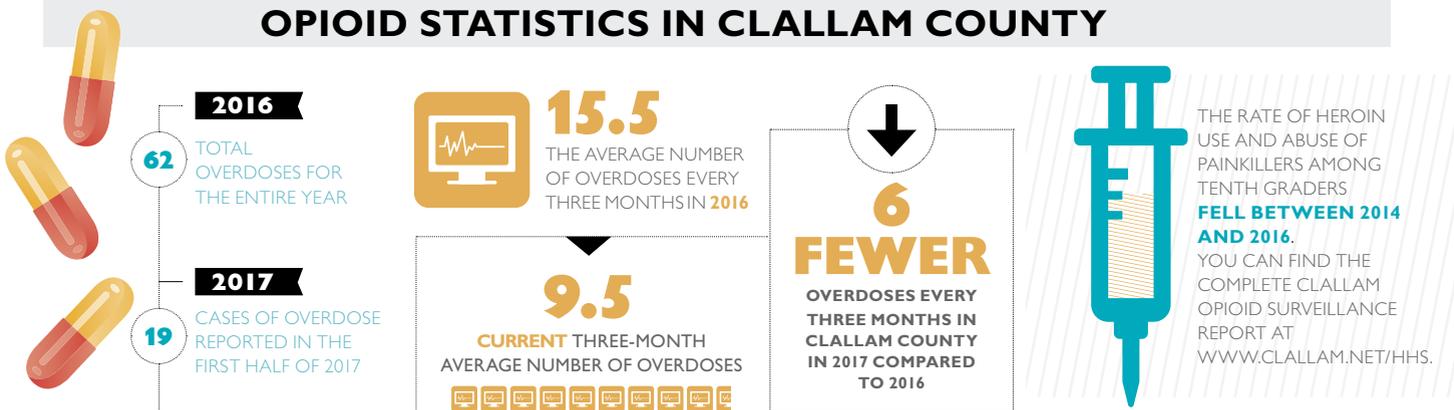
Opioid addiction is treated the same way that conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure are treated – through evidence-based methods, including medication, counseling and therapy.

“Certain Olympic Medical primary care physicians can offer medications that reduce cravings and block the pleasurable sensation that comes from using opioids,” Dr. Stafford says. “We also offer group counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy, and we encourage patients to participate in self-help programs such as Narcotics Anonymous.”



Michele Stafford, DO

## OPIOID STATISTICS IN CLALLAM COUNTY



# Primary Care Grows at Olympic Medical Physicians



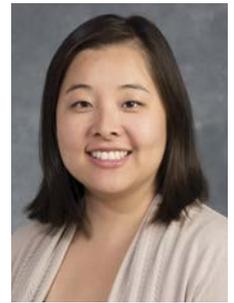
**TWO NEW PRIMARY** care physicians recently joined the community as Olympic Medical Physicians providers.

Jinlin Brendel, DO, obtained her doctor of osteopathy at A.T. Still University – Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Missouri, and completed her family medicine residency at the University of Colorado, Rose Medical Center in Denver this past summer. She began seeing patients at the Olympic Medical Physicians Primary Care Clinic in Sequim this September.

Angela Larson, MD, joined the Olympic Medical Physicians Primary Care Clinic in Port Angeles in September as well. She obtained her medical degree from Oregon

Health & Science University in Portland and completed her residency at Family Medicine of Southwest Washington. She is also an undergraduate of the University of Washington. Dr. Larson is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. She most recently cared for patients as a family physician at St. Charles Medical Center Intermediate Care in Bend, Oregon.

“We are so fortunate to have these excellent physicians join our primary care team,” says Joshua Jones, MD, chief physician officer at Olympic Medical Physicians. “We will continue to grow this practice, and recruit the physicians and skilled personnel needed to create more access to primary care.”



Jinlin Brendel, DO



Angela Larson, MD

## Orthopaedic Surgeon Returns Home



Dustin Larson, MD

**DUSTIN LARSON, MD**, graduated Port Angeles High School and Peninsula College (Running Start program) in 1996 and set off to Seattle to continue his education.

More than 20 years later, Dr. Larson has returned home to Port Angeles and now works at Olympic Medical Physicians Orthopaedic Clinic, next to his brother and fellow orthopaedic surgeon Loren Larson, MD.

“It is fantastic to have physicians who grew up in the area returning to establish their practices,” says Joshua Jones, MD, chief physician officer at Olympic Medical Physicians.

Dr. Larson recently worked at The Center for Orthopaedic & Neurosurgical Care &

Research in Bend, Oregon. He obtained his medical degree at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. He completed his fellowship in orthopaedic hand surgery from The University of New Mexico, and his residency and internship in orthopaedic surgery at the same institution.

Olympic Medical Physicians Orthopaedic Clinic is a full-service practice located in Port Angeles and Sequim, with five surgeons, also including Dirk Gouge, DO, Thomas Herschmiller, MD, and foot-and-ankle specialist John Seddon, MD. Certified Physician Assistants Matthew Kiddle and Dean Short also support the practice.

**For more information on the Olympic Medical Physicians Orthopaedic Clinic and its practitioners, visit [www.OlympicMedical.org](http://www.OlympicMedical.org), select “Services” and then choose “Orthopaedics.”**



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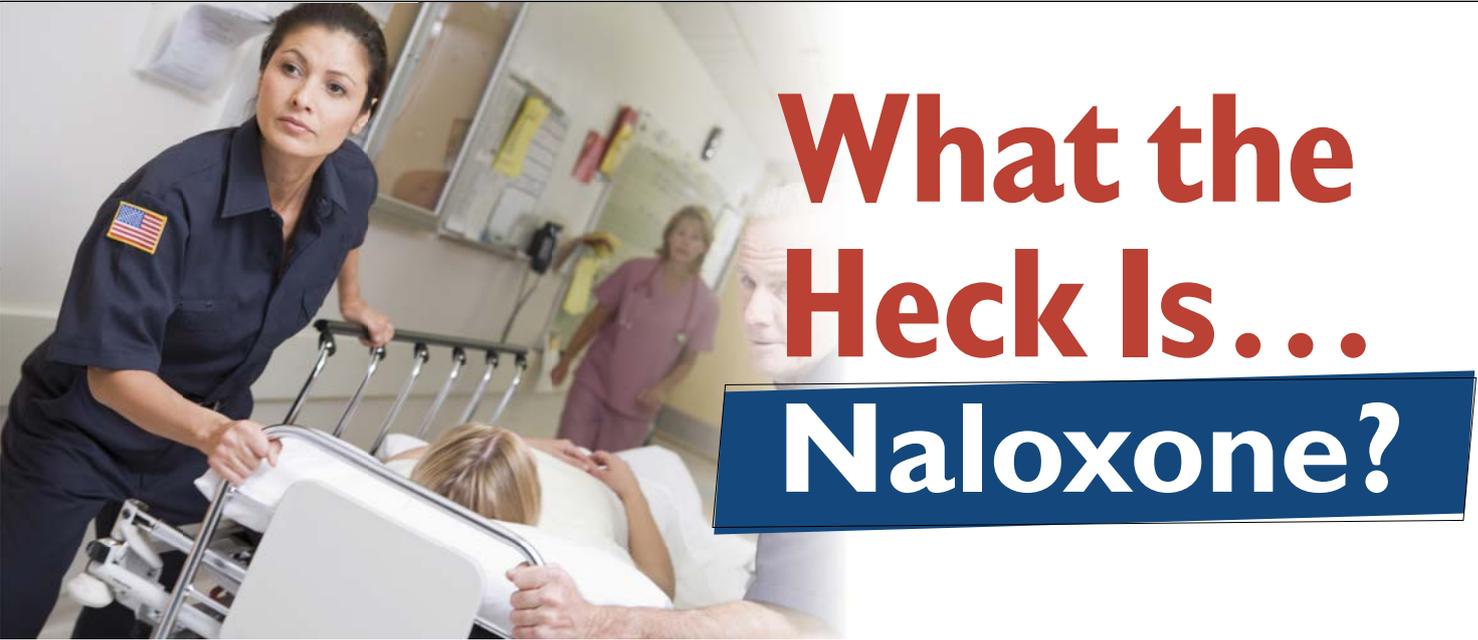
Olympic Medical Center complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. For more information, contact the Patient Experience Manager at Olympic Medical Center, 939 Caroline Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362 or call 360-417-7256 or 360-417-8686 (TTY).

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-360-417-7000 (TTY: 1-360-417-8686).

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-360-417-7000 (TTY: 1-360-417-8686)。

**For more information, visit Olympic Medical Center at [www.olympicmedical.org](http://www.olympicmedical.org).**

*This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise guidelines.*



**Naloxone is a prescription medication that helps save lives from opioid overdose every day.**

**WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE** in the midst of an opioid overdose, they may feel confused, lose consciousness, breathe more slowly than usual or stop breathing altogether. Naloxone, an opioid antagonist, blocks these life-threatening symptoms of opioid overdose. When naloxone is administered during an overdose, the medication can reverse the detrimental effects.

“Think of naloxone as the antidote for opioid overdose,” says Chris Frank, MD, PhD, family physician and Clallam County health officer and family medicine physician. “We know it doesn’t treat the underlying opioid use disorder, but it can reverse potentially life-threatening events and give people an opportunity to get treatment.”

In communities across the country, including Clallam County, law enforcement officers and paramedics carry naloxone so they can administer it on-site to community members when needed. Naloxone is also available to community members at high risk of overdose, or their families, through Clallam County Health and Human Services Syringe Service Program.

“Naloxone is an extremely safe medication with few side effects,” Dr. Frank says. “We need to make sure we continue to provide it in the community so it is available when it’s needed.”

**For more information about the substance abuse resources available through Clallam County Health and Human Services, visit [www.clallam.net/HHS/HumanServices/cdresources.html](http://www.clallam.net/HHS/HumanServices/cdresources.html).**