



## Boone Memorial Hospital creates programs to tackle the opioid epidemic, including a Quick Response Team (QRT)

*by Karlie Belle Price, Marketing and Public Relations Director (Boone Memorial Hospital)*

West Virginia has led the nation in drug overdose death rates for the past several years. From 2014 to 2017, the drug overdose death rate in West Virginia increased from a rate of 35.5 per 100,000 to 57.8 per 100,000, far exceeding any other state in the nation. In Boone County, 64.6 per every 100,000 people died from prescription drug overdoses. That's almost 5 times the national average. In addition, a 2018 study found the opioid crisis cost Boone County's economy an estimated \$206.5 million per year – the highest per capita burden of any U.S. county.

Boone Memorial Hospital, located in Madison, West Virginia developed plans in 2019 to tackle the opioid epidemic in Boone County, and surrounding areas. The hospital, in partnership with Marshall Health, PROACT (Provider Response Organization for Addiction, Care and Treatment) of Huntington and Cabell Huntington Hospital received the AFA State Opioid Response: Community Innovation for Treatment Access and Retention grant. The purpose of the grant is to utilize funding to address the opioid crisis by increasing services in underserved areas, such as Boone County.



In lieu of grant funding, Boone Memorial Hospital opened Brighter Futures, Substance and Mental Health Treatment Program, located in the Hill Chiropractic building. Brighter Futures offers various spokes including social services, group and individual therapy, peer recovery, medication assisted treatment, clinical assessments, referral services, career placement, career readiness training, job placement, work-site monitoring, prevention and spiritual care. In addition, Brighter Futures plans to add transportation and dental care services in the near future.



Brent Tomblin and Kelley Massey

Under the direction of Boone Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer, Virgil Underwood, Chief Development Officer, David Gresham and Brighter Futures Executive Director, Brent Tomblin, the hospital added an additional spoke in October 2020 - a QRT Program (Quick Response Team).

Through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) Office for Drug Control Policy, approximately \$225,000 in grant funding was secured to develop the Boone County QRT Program. Boone Memorial Hospital, in partnership with the Boone

County Health Department, developed the program, which is led by Boone County native, Kelley Massey (Program Director).

The Boone County Quick Response Team (QRT) is an integrated team of emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, faith leaders, law enforcement officers and recovery resource advocates dedicated to serving individuals struggling with addiction in Boone County, West Virginia and surrounding communities. The team is trained to respond to overdose victims within 72 hours following a life-threatening drug overdose. The team will also see individuals who are battling addiction and have been referred by friends or family. The QRT is considered the "first responder unit" in narcotic-related emergencies.

## OUR MISSION

To spread awareness, educate and advocate with an aim of decreasing overdoses and overdose deaths.

### **QRT ROLE:**

OFFER A VARIETY OF RESOURCES, SUCH AS:

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Ambulance Authority provides public health education to individuals and their families.
- Faith Leaders make personal visits (upon request) to provide pastoral counseling to individuals and families in need.
- Law Enforcement Officers provides security for team members.
- Recovery Resource Advocates provides information on available care and finds the best recovery and treatment options.

In addition, the team connects individuals to specialty and primary care providers who can answer questions and concerns related to the medical care provided for an overdose as well as other general medical questions and concerns. The Quick Response Team was created to meet individuals and their loved ones where they are and, in turn, provide hope, recovery and support. The Quick Response Team assists in securing treatment options and recovery services, which may include residential treatment, detoxification, medication-assisted treatment, primary care, therapy and social services.



**BOONE COUNTY QRT PARTNERS:**

While partners may vary nationwide, the Boone County QRT Program is made possible through collaboration among various organizations, including:

- Boone County Ambulance Authority (BCAA)
- Boone County Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Boone County Health Department
- Boone County Sheriff's Department
- Boone Memorial Hospital
- Brighter Futures (Boone Memorial Substance & Mental Health Treatment)
- Civic Organizations
- Faith Leaders
- Prester Center (behavioral health care and addictions recovery services)

The Boone County QRT Program began seeing clients on October 20, 2020. From that period to December 31st, 2020 (just over 2 months) the program received 71 referrals. Of those referrals, various are still receiving visits and/or have been referred to treatment programs. The Boone County QRT Program is in the process of creating a home goods and clothing store for those patients in need.



*"If you can quit for a day, you can quit for a lifetime"*

For more information about the Boone County Quick Response Team please contact Kelley Massey, Program Director at 304-369-1230, Ext. 4610.