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OTPG Conference  
11/11/2024  
Chateau Elan Resort  
100 Rue Charlemagne Dr  
Braselton, GA 30517

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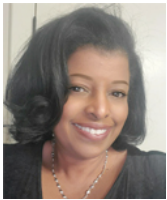


real help = real hope

OTPG QUARTERLY SEPT. 19, 2024

## Message from the President

By Dr. Kimberly Coley Henderson | President, OTPG



### Greetings Providers,

We have had a fast-paced year with celebrated accomplishments along with continued work towards completing ongoing initiatives as we create "Real Help and Real Hope" for Opioid Use Disorder patients in Georgia. Let us look

at the accomplishments, ongoing initiatives, and plans for the future.

Beginning in the last quarter of 2023, Opioid Treatment providers were busy in their communities attending local task force meetings, consulting with the leadership of the Georgia Department about Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and with the Department of Community Health (DCH) and supporting partners at the Georgia Council for Recovery Annual Luncheon, and meetings with Substance Abuse Research Alliance (SARA). We lobbied against the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act (MOTAA) and shared concern about the potential harmful effects on our State and our Nation as lawmakers engaged in talks of moving Methadone outside the trained environment of Opioid Treatment Programs. OTPG tackled Medicaid billing practices and managed to impact a change in policy for Medication for Opioid Use Disorder patient care. Additionally, we began our joint venture with CareLink of Georgia and DBHDD to create a workforce development program to benefit and enhance our treatment program workforce.

Next, this momentum continued into the first quarter of 2024, as OTPG representatives accepted an invitation from The Georgia Department of Public Health's Opioid Prevention and Response Unit to participate as subject matter experts.

Simultaneously, news of the release of the Opioid Abatement Settlement funds flooded our State. We were prepared to have a voice in decisions made about the distribution of funds and to engage in writing proposals for grant funding. Fortunately, we were able to get six OTPG Board members appointed to the Regional and Block Abatement decision-making teams. Additionally, our MOUD, Workforce Development Training program started and presented dynamic trainers from every facet of MOUD treatment for providers to partake in. Furthermore, we were able to provide every OTPG program with free Narcan for their patients and community. At the same time, we started planning for our Annual Conference that will be held at the beautiful Chateau Elan in Braselton, Georgia this year.

The second quarter of 2024 was filled with excitement about the new SAMHSA guidelines and with our State leaders and American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD). These new guidelines are life-sustaining for our patients and our industry. We went to great lengths to make sure all providers were fully knowledgeable of the new guidelines. A provider survey of needs was conducted and a question-and-answer session on the new SAMHSA guidelines was executed. As a continued effort to partner with stakeholders, we spoke with the Georgia Council for Recovery to collaborate on transportation barriers for patients and with Georgia Recovers regarding addressing stigmas and telling the stories of patients that are in treatment for MOUD. In addition, DBHDD engaged in conversation about solutions for incarcerated OUD patients, and the Department of Community Health conversed about telehealth guidance for our programs. Our Veteran Administration (VA) partners have agreed to help providers understand VA systems and provide a pathway to treatment for patients not treated within the VA system. We are also striving to form a partnership with our State DATEP programs.

As you can see, we need all of us to continue with the momentum we have begun. I am excited for what the future will bring  
**Dr. Kimberly Coley Henderson, OTPG President 2024**

**Conference Recap “ A New 2024 ”** By Joelyn Alfred | Lakeland Centres



**Bravo! A Standing Ovation for the Successful 2023 OTPG Conference!**

The illustrious stage was set using the Beautiful Omni Hotel– at the Battery Atlanta, as our backdrop. On the

point where our spectacular presenters who helped us to broaden our horizons with excellent facts, invigorating ideas, and tips on "How Can We Access You Part II?" We were honored to welcome Commissioner Kevin Tanner from The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). Commission Tanner eagerly shared the many updates that are both promising and challenging for the state of Georgia.

**Another special honor was to welcome our Keynote Speaker- Ben Westhoff.**

He undoubtedly satiated our palates with pertinent, reflective, and eye opening information, and as an added plus, his bestselling book, Fentanyl Inc., was also distributed to membership.



If you missed this opportunity to receive this most enlightening book, please contact Ben Westhoff directly at [ben.westhoff@gmail.com](mailto:ben.westhoff@gmail.com).

Another Huge Round of Applause and “THANK YOU” to all of the sponsors, presenters, translators, photographers and volunteers! Collectively, we are a strong electrifying force that continues to trailblaze and reinvigorate our industry in offering, "Real Help, Real Hope!"

OTPG looks forward to seeing all of you again soon at the new location of Chateau Elan for the 2024 OTPG Conference that will be held on November 11, 2024– Monday. The new atmosphere is inviting, relaxing and simply gorgeous.

**Please join us and register today by visiting <https://www.otpggeorgia.org/>, and don't forget to try out for this year's First OTPG's Got Talent Show that will be held on the pre-conference date of November 10, 2024-Sunday.**



**Until then I am sending you Hugs and more Hugs!!,  
Joelyn Alfred-OTPG Conference Chair**

**Looking forward to seeing all of you again soon at the new location of Chateau Elan for the 2024 OTPG Conference that will be held on November 11, 2024-Monday**



OTPs provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for people diagnosed with an opioid-use disorder. MAT patients also must receive counseling, which can include different forms of behavioral therapy.

## Types of Medicated Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction and how they compare.

Buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone are used to treat opioid use disorders (OUD) to short-acting opioids such as heroin, morphine, and codeine, as well as semi-synthetic opioids like oxycodone and hydrocodone. These medications are safe to use for months, years, or even a lifetime.

- **Buprenorphine** – suppresses and reduces cravings for opioids.
- **Methadone** – reduces opioid cravings and withdrawal and blunts or blocks the effects of opioids.
- **Naltrexone** – blocks the euphoric and sedative effects of opioids and prevents feelings of euphoria.

How does Methadone compare to other medications used to treat opioid use disorder?

- **There are three medications that are approved for treating opioid use disorder: methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone.**

- **Naltrexone** is a pure opioid antagonist—a medication that blocks the activation of opioid receptors in your central or peripheral nervous system—[that is administered by an] injection that lasts 30 days. The patient acceptance rate for naltrexone is not very high. It's very difficult to get people past their first injections to stay on it.

- **Methadone and buprenorphine**—and both are very effective. Generally, we have a discussion with patients about how each of [the medications] could fit into their life. Methadone is very regulated in terms of specific treatment programs that provide and dispense the drug. Buprenorphine we've had since 2002, and until then, there was little we could do in an office setting aside from methadone to alleviate opioid withdrawal and treat opioid use disorder.

## Opioid Overdose Prevention Medication

Naloxone and nalmefene are both FDA-approved opioid overdose reversal medications (OORMs) that save lives by reversing the toxic effects of overdose. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), naloxone is one of a number of medications considered essential to a functioning health care system.

- **Naloxone** – used to prevent opioid overdose, naloxone reverses the toxic effects of the overdose. In March 2023, the FDA approved naloxone nasal spray as the first over-the-counter OORM and is available in many pharmacies, through community-based distribution programs, local public health organizations or local health departments, free of charge.
- **Nalmefene** – an FDA-approved OORM nasal spray that is available by prescription only and is intended for use in healthcare and community settings for individuals who are 12 years old and over.

## Counseling and Behavioral Therapies

Under federal law 42 CFR 8.12, opioid treatment programs (OTPs) must be able to provide counseling, along with medical, vocational, educational, and other assessment and treatment services. Learn more about these treatments for substance use disorders.

Regardless of what setting the medication is provided, it is more effective when counseling and other services are available to provide patients with a whole-person approach and to support their recovery.

## Five Big Benefits of Counseling in Drug Addiction

1. Identify situations contributing to substance use.
2. Provide direct support for addiction.
3. Provide peer support for addiction.
4. Can offer new behavior strategies for recovery.
5. Can reduce the risk of relapse.

**Source By: Izutsu, T., & Tsutsumi, A. (2024). Mental Health and Well-Being of LGBTQI+ Persons. IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.1004359**

## Patient Advocate

By Courtney Connell | Private Clinic North



Twelve years ago I couldn't have guessed the amount of personal growth that would come from a career choice in addiction counseling at Private Clinic. Pursuing my passion, earning two certifications, working for my family, developing my own opinions (and a backbone), moving cities (twice), battling my own eating disorder and mental health and carrying the weight of the stigma of working at an Opioid Treatment Program and everything in between has been one roller coaster of a journey.

I've been called a "legal drug dealer" more times than I can count by strangers and even some family members. Most of the negative conversations I've had come from people who really don't know anything about the addiction, the treatment or the recovery. Ultimately, it's dialogue (if you can even call it that) with ones who choose to believe only what they see on TV or what they hear from others.

### They don't see what I do.

I see people every day who are willing to make the necessary behavioral changes to live a normal, happy, fulfilling, drug-free life.

And because I can predict the rebuttal to that, I will share this caveat. As with anything in life, nothing and no one is perfect. There will be some of my patients who relapse and recover from it and some who won't. Some people aren't ready for treatment and addiction takes their life before they get another chance.

I see people every day who are willing to unpack the hard truths about themselves that surfaced as addiction, like, eating disorders, depression, anger, anxiety, mental illness,

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childhood trauma and abuse, rape– all things that I bet you, a loved one or someone you know have experienced too. But maybe your circumstances, your environment, your genetics or your education helped lead you down a different path than those I serve. Thankfully for me, my knowledge about opioid and other addictions did, and I don't take that for granted.

I see people who show up every day to work their program of recovery in a place that is safe for them, only to be ridiculed and judged by society.

It's 2024 and we still live in a time where a treatment modality is judged as much, if not more, than the addiction itself. Methadone, Suboxone and Subutex aren't bad words. They actually provide hope and give meaning and opportunity for people to live outside of the chains of their addiction when it's done the right way, with counseling and proper, well-rounded care, change is made.

I hate that there's a lack of education of the benefit that Medication Assisted Treatment can have on someone's well-being, in our families, in our neighborhoods and in our country.

Addiction affects the entire family, but if given the chance, recovery can too.

## Come Join Us! become an OTPG member

The annual membership dues are listed below and are based on the current patient census of your facility.

•0-149 patients: \$250

•150-299 patients: \$500

•300-499 patients:  
\$1,000

•500+ patients: \$1,500

Please visit our web site  
for more information on  
membership.



Get to know the OTPG board members visit [www.otpga.org](http://www.otpga.org)

### The benefits available to members of OTPG:

- Four free one CEC trainings during 2021
- Access to free hotline maintained by Jackson-Lewis PC, labor and employment law specialists
- Membership with the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD)
- Discounted education opportunities
- Affiliation with community organizations
- Updated state and federal information to include statistics, changes to regulations, available funds, etc.
- Chance to network within our industry
- Ability to purchase discounted copies of "Exploring the World of Opioid Addiction"