

## Prescription Drug Abuse—A Growing Problem

For a number of years the abuse of prescription drugs has been making headlines as the general public learns of the consequences of taking these powerful medications. When we hear of people driving under the influence or committing domestic violence, we have assumed that alcohol was the problem, but now a growing list of celebrities admitting prescription drug abuse highlight this increasing social problem. Almost 50 million people, approximately 20% of the US population, have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons during their lifetimes.

We see several classes of drugs more commonly abused by the patients who come to Residence XII. Opiates, originally derived from opium, are a powerful class of drug used for pain relief and include Darvon, Demerol, Dilaudid, MS Contin, OxyContin, Vicodin, and Percocet to name a few. In therapeutic doses these drugs relieve pain effectively. Abuse of opiates, however, leads to physical addiction with mild to severe withdrawal symptoms that mimic the flu. Opiate abuse can affect breathing/respiration and create a number of other serious health issues. Opiates are the most commonly abused prescription drugs in the United States.

Another commonly abused class of drug is tranquilizers and sedatives. Benzodiazepines were developed in the sixties and seventies to treat anxiety, sleep disorders and panic attacks by decreasing brain activity. We see patients who become reliant on Valium, Librium, Xanax, Ativan and Klonopin. When used in therapeutic dosages, these medications are a short-term answer for acute episodes of emotional and physical distress but were not intended for long-term use. Benzodiazepines can be highly addictive because over time the body requires higher doses to achieve the same initial effect. Withdrawal from this class of drug calls for close monitoring as the brain's activity can rebound and race out of control leading to seizures or other harmful results.

We find that many of the women who come to Residence XII have abused medications given to them by their physician or psychiatrist. As the addiction progresses, we see women using multiple doctors, emergency rooms

and walk-in clinics as sources for their drugs. Sometimes these drugs are purchased on the street from the same dealers who provide heroin, marijuana and other street drugs. We have seen a significant rise in the number of women who access the internet to buy drugs from multiple drug sites in virtual anonymity.

The majority of these women started using opiates in response to specific health issues such as chronic pain, multiple surgeries and accidents but physicians and psychiatrists also prescribe benzodiazepines for major life changes that bring a degree of anxiety and worry such as divorce, job loss, death of a loved one, and trauma.

Research studies indicate that women are more likely than men to be prescribed abusable prescription drugs, especially opiates/prescription narcotics and benzodiazepines, the anti-anxiety drugs. In some cases, women are 55% more likely to be prescribed these drugs. In addition research has shown that women have an increased risk for abuse of these narcotics and tranquilizers. Residence XII sees younger women using opiates and benzos that are stolen from parents, friends or family, although some younger women are put on high risk medications for sports-related injuries, menstrual problems and panic attacks. Women age 65 or older are more likely to unintentionally misuse drugs due to long-term use and multiple prescriptions but are also at risk for taking drugs that are not medically necessary. High rates of multiple illnesses, changes in drug metabolism with age, and the potential for drug interactions can have more adverse health consequences with this group than a younger population.

Treatment for prescription drug use may start with a medical detoxification. There are several hospitals in

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**Karen Canida,  
Assessment and  
Referral Counselor**

## Director's Corner—Summer 2009

### Why Abstinence?

This quarter I wanted to talk about one of the ways we differ from some other treatment programs. To be effective, a variety of treatment programs must be available to work appropriately with the wide variety of patients who seek our services. No one program or model can effectively treat all populations which makes the range of programs and the continuum of services so critical.

One of the common concerns I hear about Residence XII is that we should be accepting patients on opiate substitution medications such as Methadone and Suboxone. I have also received suggestions that we are too restrictive in accepting patients on mind and mood altering medications for pain control. Clearly research has shown that there is a need and a benefit to these medications for certain patients. I am grateful that there are programs dedicated to working with the patients who need these substances to function.

Residence XII, however, is a 12-step-based abstinence program. The women we work with are capable of achieving abstinence as a goal. That has been the premise of our program for 29 years and one which will continue to guide our future. We believe it would be clinically inappropriate to place a patient on the above medications in an abstinence-based treatment program. This would be confusing and not helpful to the treatment of the patients.

### Prescription Drug Abuse—A Growing Problem

*(continued from front cover)*

the Puget Sound area that provide medical monitoring for withdrawal. If medical detox is necessary it usually lasts three to seven days, depending on the drug being used, the amounts and frequency, and the combinations of alcohol and drugs used. After detoxification, women are admitted to either a residential or intensive outpatient setting where they participate in education about the disease of addiction and behavioral counseling to identify problem areas that may trigger use.

With women who use opiates, significant time is spent on pain management and learning alternative tools to deal with pain. Those who have depended on benzodiazepines identify triggers to anxiety, panic and depression and learn tools to deal with the emotions before they escalate out of control. Behavioral treatments can help women improve their relationships and ability to function at work and elsewhere. Ongoing support is crucial for all substance

It is not that we don't recognize the value of medication-assisted treatment, but rather we believe that there are programs designed to meet the needs of that particular population. We also have concerns that both Methadone and Suboxone, prescription medications, are sold on the streets for a variety of reasons beyond their intended clinical use.

We embrace the need for a wide spectrum of treatment programs, all designed to fully benefit the patients they serve. The field of addiction medicine is relatively young and imperfect. We have much to learn together and there will not be one answer or way to treat everyone. But we all share the same goal of helping those who have been affected by the disease of addiction resume satisfying lives in recovery.

I welcome your feedback and, as always, I appreciate your support for Residence XII and the women and families we serve.



**Sharon Chambers,  
Executive Director**

abusers. The 12-step program of Narcotics Anonymous is seeing more prescription drug addicts and Dual Recovery Anonymous supports women dealing with depression and anxiety, as well as addiction.

Residence XII provides a support group for women who are addicted to prescribed medications. The Rx group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 8:30 pm. This group is structured in much the same way as a 12 step meeting but also provides the opportunity to give each other feedback. The Rx meeting is facilitated by a Residence XII Counselor. Women in recovery from the abuse of prescription medications must be up front with their health care providers, tell them about their addiction history and be active in their treatment planning, especially around medications.

*Source for information provided: NIDA, Research Report Series, Prescription Drugs, Abuse and Addiction Rev. 2005*

# News from Residence XII

## Annual Luncheon to “Celebrate the Power of Recovery”

Residence XII will host its Third Annual Benefit Luncheon during National Recovery Month in September. This year’s event will take place on Thursday, September 24th in the lovely new ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. The Residence XII Benefit Luncheon is the signature fundraising event for our organization as we ask for donor support of our programs for women in recovery. Our guest Emcee will be Roberta Romero, KING 5 Television news reporter.

The Third Annual Residence XII Luncheon is also an important opportunity to raise the level of dialogue about the importance of addiction treatment and “Celebrate the Power of Recovery” as we help women return to satisfying lives with their families, at their work and in their communities. Although there is no ticket charge for the luncheon, there will be an opportunity for guests to give in support of the work of Residence XII so we can continue to provide affordable, high quality treatment services.

Residence XII is very grateful to the Univar Foundation for providing the very generous Leadership Gift for our luncheon. Univar has been a Circle of Recovery supporter of Residence XII for some time; this year they increased their commitment to our programs. More detailed information will be provided at our luncheon in September.

If you would like to serve as a volunteer host for a table or make a reservation to attend, please contact Pat Dye, Director of Development at (425) 823-8844 or by email at [pdye@residencexii.org](mailto:pdye@residencexii.org).



**Wendy Clark,  
Treatment Director, and  
Mark Dobrinen, Univar**

## Greta Kruger Receives Annual Nichols Award

On May 8, 2009 Greta Kruger received the Ann Nichols Leadership Award for excellence in the field of addiction treatment. Greta first became involved with Residence XII as a volunteer in 1981 and then worked at Residence XII South, Highline Community



**Greta Kruger, Nichols Award Recipient, and her family**

Hospital for nine years as Department Head. She later served as Outreach & Intervention Manager and is currently a Counselor, specializing in the treatment of Older Women. Approximately 75 peers, friends and alumnae attended a reception in Greta’s honor. We wish to thank Eric Sakai, our Chef and Kitchen Manager, for the delicious food he prepared. This award has never been awarded to a Residence XII staff member, however over the years many people have nominated Greta and this year a group came to us and made the case for this well-deserved recognition. Greta’s impact on women in recovery is demonstrated regularly but no more so than at Alumnae Retreats when many bring their cameras, seek out Greta and ask for a picture to be taken with her. As all of our Alumnae know—Greta is truly a Wise Woman™.

## Addiction Forum Sponsored by Residence XII and Hazelden

On March 27, 2009, Residence XII sponsored an Addiction Forum in conjunction with Hazelden at Seattle University. Almost 100 addiction professionals attended including therapists, EAPS, nurses and psychologists. The Treatment/Clinical Directors of both agencies spoke and shared current data and trends about integrating the treatment of addiction and trauma and the impact of shame on treatment and recovery. Continuing Education Credits were offered to those attending the program.

## My Sobriety Date

My sobriety date is November 25, 1989. Prior to coming to Residence XII, I had managed to make a disaster of my life. I was emotionally and spiritually depleted and I was angry with anyone and everyone. I blamed my disastrous present on everything outside of me, when the real culprit was me and my alcoholism.

I was at a point in my life where I wasn't really living—I was just surviving—so when my doctor suggested treatment, I was ready to go. Even though I was at the Res of my own choosing, I arrived extremely angry and resentful. It wasn't until the second week of treatment that I even realized that my drinking was the cause of my misery. I finally became willing to listen to others who had been where I had. I left treatment and followed the suggestions of my counselor and lived in a clean and sober house for over a year. I did close to 120 meetings in 90 days, and changed everything about my life.

The biggest change was being honest with myself and my family. I understood that I would be unable to stay clean and sober if I was not honest. Another suggestion that I followed was to get involved with service work and I volunteered with the Alumnae Association at the Res. We planned retreats and helped organize different events that the Res sponsored.

## A Counselor's Perspective

What I remember most about walking through the doors of Residence XII for the first time is the serenity I felt. Normally I would not describe walking into a new place for a job interview as serene, but that was what I felt. It was different from any other treatment center I had seen. There was a living room with a beautiful view (and some coyotes)! People were doing yoga and even got a massage after their first step. Staff, patients, family, and alums talked recovery and believed in our mission. When I met my coworkers, I was astounded at the quality of women I was meeting. Each seemed to have a special gift. I came across some of the most intelligent, caring, and witty women I have ever met.

But the primary reason I came to Residence XII was to work with the women we serve. I have the privilege of meeting you when you come upstairs for inpatient treatment. During your stay I get to meet your Addict™, but I also get to meet your Wise Woman™ and watch her grow. I observe you as you start believing in yourself. My favorite thing about working here is watching the incredible transformations. I see the fear replaced with hope and in most cases, defeat turns into triumph. Some

Today, I am still a member of the Alumnae Association as well as a member of the Board of Directors. I work in Loss Prevention for Safeway and am very grateful for Safeway's support of me and my Board involvement. This year I will also host several tables at the Res' annual luncheon which celebrates the power of recovery; Safeway has generously become a major sponsor of the event.



**Stacy, ResXII Alumna**

I am so grateful to Residence XII; it's often said that they save your life. I know that they saved mine. I also know that if there hadn't been a place like the Res to go to, I am certain that I would not be here today. As I approach my 20th year of sobriety, I know that the two things that I must maintain as the focus of my life are honesty and willingness. Honesty to myself and others and a willingness to do what I am told to do, and need to do. For me, they are the keys to my continued sobriety and happiness. Residence XII gave me the tools to live a sober life and Alcoholics Anonymous gave me the tools to live a fulfilled life. I have learned that all I really have is today, and I intend to make the most of it.

of you may have heard me say this next part before... It is so wonderful to hear you laughing together! Really laughing, from your belly... all while completely sober! For some of you these belly laughs are the first sober laughs in a very long time. Whether it is memories of playing Apples to Apples, Pictionary, singing with Marna or just walking to the park together, the friendship and support is wonderful. And now, thanks to the Alumnae Committee, we have potlucks! It is amazing to see women connect with each other through the Res and I love reading the cards and letters sent back to us and posted in the copy room. They tell us more about your satisfying experiences as you celebrate the often hard work of recovery. Residence XII patients are such strong, brave and determined women—I have such incredible respect for what you do.



**Gina, ResXII Counselor**

Every day I get to wake up and do work that I love – I'm grateful to be at Residence XII with so many wonderful women.

# Introducing the Residence XII Legacy Donors™

## *Investing in the Future of Recovery™*

Have you ever asked yourself how you wish to be remembered? What sort of legacy you want to leave for future generations? After you have taken care of your family, what causes or organizations tug at your heartstrings or have made a difference in your life? These are the questions that drive individuals to give to support a cause or an organization, typically through current tax deductible donations. But what about the future? What might you do now that could leave a lasting impact on the lives of people for many years to come?

Residence XII is pleased to introduce the Residence XII Legacy Donors™. This is an important group of donors who have decided to make an investment in the future of Residence XII through some form of planned giving that will make an impact on the lives of women and their families over the long term. Residence XII opened its doors on August 16, 1981, and since that time has become one of the leading treatment centers in the country specializing in gender-specific treatment for women. Planned gifts help ensure that the work and mission of Residence XII will live on in perpetuity.

Donor gifts to non-profits like Residence XII typically fall into two categories: present gifts and deferred gifts. Residence XII has been fortunate to have many donors who support our work through current gifts of cash and stock. We would like to ask our supporters to consider three very simple deferred gifts that can be put in place now for future distribution:

- Bequests
- Life Insurance Death Proceeds
- Retirement Plan Designation

We are happy to answer any questions you might have about making a planned charitable gift to Residence XII. While we cannot provide specific tax or estate planning advice, we welcome the opportunity to work with you and your estate planning professional to ensure that your charitable giving goals are realized.

We are very grateful to those who have recently made such gifts to Residence XII to enable us to grow and serve more women.

## Become a Legacy Donor™

Join the Residence XII Legacy Donors™ and invest in the future of recovery.

- **Bequests:**  
One of the simplest ways to make a gift to Residence XII is under the terms of your Will. A Will allows you to control the future distributions of your estate, and gifts to a charitable organization such as Residence XII are deductible for estate tax purposes and can help you reduce or eliminate estate taxes.
- **Life Insurance Death Proceeds:**  
By making Residence XII a designated beneficiary of proceeds from a life insurance policy, you can ensure that Residence XII will receive your gift without going through the process of estate probate.
- **Retirement Plan Designation:**  
The traditional IRA can also be “rolled over” to Residence XII which eliminates any potential income and estate tax exposure. Distributions on Roth IRAs are actually income tax deductible if paid to Residence XII.

If you are interested in becoming a legacy donor, please call Pat Dye, Director of Development at (425) 823-8844. All conversations are strictly confidential.

## Alumnae Events

### Alumnae Planning Committee

Third Saturday of every month, 10am - 11:30am at the Res

### Annual Alumnae Picnic - Sunday, August 16, 2009:

11:00 – 2:00 pm at St. Edwards State Park. Bring your family!

### Alumnae Potlucks - Friday, September 18, 2009 & Friday, November 20, 2009

6 pm in the Oak Room

### Fall Alumnae Retreat - Saturday, October 24, 2009

10 am - 8 pm at the Courtyard Marriott in Kirkland. "Tools for Sobriety"

### Spring Alumnae Retreat - Friday-Sunday May 21-23, 2010

Friday 4 pm - Sunday 4 pm at Mountain River Lodge in Easton, Washington

For more information about these events, contact  
pdye@residencexii.org or call Pat at (425) 823-8844

## Upcoming Residence XII Events

### Thursday, September 24, 2009:

#### Third Annual Residence XII Benefit Luncheon

12:00 – 1:00 pm at the Hyatt Regency in Bellevue

### Friday, December 4, 2009: Candlelight Meeting

7:00 – 9:00 pm at the North Kirkland Community Center

For alumnae, their guests, sponsors and staff. This is a women's- only event.

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