



For More Information:
Megan Cooper
937-496-2000 x2055 or 937-232-9096
mcooper@eastway.org

Eastway's behavioral medication program growing Through intensive medication treatment, clients are moving toward recovery

Dayton, OH: Schizophrenics with numerous hospital stays, severe and disabling symptoms, and even suicide attempts, often feel as if there is no hope for recovery. Eastway Behavioral Healthcare provides these clients with an intensive "last resort" medication regimen that provides relief – the program has recently passed the goal of supporting fifty clients simultaneously.

Eastway's intensive medication treatment program is offered to clients who have a long history of numerous hospital stays and demonstrated resistance to other medications. A requirement of participation in the program is that clients meet with the medical staff regularly to determine that the medication is not causing a threat to their health. In early stages of recovery, clients are monitored daily for changes in weight, white blood cell counts, and vital signs. As the patients recover, the clinic visits change to weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly. All 54 clients come to the clinic during one week of the month for extensive monitoring and a visit with the doctor.

The Eastway program is run by Director of Nursing Stephanie Weigel; Weigel transferred to Eastway nine years ago after eight years at Day-Mont where she ran a similar program. Weigel acknowledges that the program is controversial due to the need for close monitoring and the possible side effects, but she is happy to put in the necessary work to make sure the clients are recovering in a safe environment. Weigel says, "It's not right for everyone, but this I've see so many people recover dramatically once they start with us. I'm really proud of the growth in the program."

Eastway uses the generic forms of Clozaril for the program. The cost to the patients varies based on the needed dosage; ranging from \$30/month to \$240/month. Whenever possible, Eastway partners with local pharmacies to secure the needed medications at a discounted rate.

Currently, there are 54 clients in the Eastway program with more on the waiting list. With both medication pick-up and laboratory services available at Eastway, in addition to therapy, medical

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care, and case management, clients use Eastway as a one-stop location for their behavioral health needs. Weigel explains that the one-stop is valuable for success of the program; each different stop for the patient with schizophrenia (doctor's offices, clinics, blood labs, pharmacies) makes acquiring the needed medication more challenging.

Success is demonstrated regularly. Many clients, who previously would miss appointments or skip medication doses, have improved dramatically through participation in the program. They have reached higher functioning levels and are now engaging in vocational and educational programs. Clients like Charles, who was recently accepted to the program, demonstrate the possible successes.

Charles began seeing substantial recovery after his first week in the program. He says, "Everything is much clearer."

NOTE: This is not an endorsement of the drug or the pharmaceutical company. Rather, a focus on the work of Eastway's medical staff as they meet the needs of the many clients who otherwise would continue to struggle with severe mental illness.

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Eastway is the largest, private, not-for-profit provider of mental health, substance abuse, housing, employment and educational services in the Miami Valley area. Eastway serves adults, children and families throughout Montgomery County and beyond – teaching people the life skills they need to take care of themselves – instilling HOPE by providing people with the opportunity to lead fulfilled lives, to feel wanted, productive, safe, secure and loved.

Eastway is a partner with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board for Montgomery County and the Family and Children First Council of Montgomery County.