



# WEST CENTRAL NEWS

April 2020/ Issue VII

**24/7 Emergency Help for Those in Crisis**  
**800-564-2578**

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## The New "Normal" - WCBH Continues to Serve Clients and Community

We are in uncharted territory, doing our best to navigate the COVID-19 threat while juggling work and personal life in suddenly changed circumstances. The health and safety of our staff and our clients are our priority, yet our clinicians must still venture into homes and out in the community to treat people with mental illness and substance use disorders.



To our front-line employees, we want to offer our sincere thanks. We're doing our best to support you as you provide services during this time, enhancing teletherapy (video and phone) and work-from-home options, when possible. Many clients still need in-person treatment. Mask makers around the Upper Valley and Sullivan County have delivered dozens of hand-sewn masks to help protect us and our clients. Thank you UV Mask Makers! Silo Distillery donated 5 gallons of hand sanitizer. FUJIFILM Dimatix donated face shields. Burton Snowboards and Goggles for Docs are donating ski goggles. And scores of individuals and organizations are helping, knowing how critical it is to care for our most vulnerable and marginalized neighbors. We are so incredibly grateful it defies words.

We continue to seek out Personal Protective Equipment donations like medical masks, face shields, goggles, personal thermometers, isolation gowns, used iPads and computer tablets with cameras and microphones. All are hard to find and pay for if we do. If you have extras, please let us know ([dcelone@wcbh.org](mailto:dcelone@wcbh.org)).

Yet, even in the face of adversity and inadequate supplies, there are bright spots. Our Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams continue to diffuse untenable situations with clients. Our Emergency Services team helps those in severe crisis every day. We are able to provide cloth masks to our pediatric patients thanks to local mask makers. We're also continuing to make sure our clients receive much-needed medications.

There are many crises within this larger coronavirus crisis that we must attend to. It's our job. It's our mission. And it's desperately needed. We are still here as caring and compassionate experts, and we're proud to pursue what we do best. We are treating our vulnerable friends and neighbors of all ages with mental illness and substance use disorders, even in the face of danger. Thank you for supporting our mission and vision today and tomorrow.

Stay healthy, stay safe, stay home if you can, please.

*Dave Celone is West Central's Director of Development & Community Relations*

## **Lead Physician Joins WCBH's New Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) at Claremont Substance Use Services Clinic**



West Central is pleased to announce Diana Berger, MD, has joined our Claremont Substance Use Services team in April, 2020. Dr. Berger will launch our Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program this month. She is experienced and passionate about taking care of people, their families, and communities struggling with the twin epidemics of heroin and prescription opioid addiction. Her practice is to listen

to her patients' stories about opioid addiction with compassion, supporting each client's recovery with a warm, non-judgmental, patient-centered approach. This is a highly personalized treatment program using Suboxone and other MAT options to help break the cycle of opioid addiction. Unlike other group treatment programs, we offer individualized therapy and individualized medication checks.

To enquire or schedule an appointment,  
please call 603-542-5128.

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## Danger and Opportunity: The Two Faces of a Crisis

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The Chinese characters for crisis. The top two, in traditional Chinese, and the bottom two, in simplified Chinese.

The two Chinese characters representing the word “crisis,” interestingly enough, describe WCBH's position as we continue to find ways to adjust our practices and provide services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first character suggests “danger,” the reality of which we're all too aware as we work to minimize the risk of becoming ill while protecting others. The second character suggests “opportunity.” West Central is moving forward to identify improved and more efficient treatment options, and acquiring the technology needed to provide teletherapy to our clients while ensuring the confidentiality of our services.

Eventually, we will be a better, stronger organization at the end of this crisis. The growing pains we're now facing will allow us to reach those living in the most rural areas, those without transportation, those without computers, cellphones, or internet, and the many who have lost loved ones or employment and who need support at this pivotal time.

Our thanks to the many individuals, organizations, and

municipalities that continue to support our efforts and the efforts of all essential workers and organizations in the area. We are so grateful for the messages of support, financial support, volunteers, and donations of Personal Protective Equipment. Stay healthy and look for opportunity!

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*Do you know them???*

## **The Masked Marvels of West Central...**

Did you ever think you would meet a superhero? Perhaps not since you were a young child. But West Central is full of superheroes, and we've been on Facebook daily to introduce them to the world!



But first, we need to thank those who have made the masks protecting our superheroes. A HUGE thank you to the Upper Valley Mask Makers Facebook group who have, thus far, made and donated over 8,000 masks to the community (see the beautiful ones featured above!) including West Central. You are all amazing, and colorful, and truly reflect what our local community is all about!



A West Central Registered Nurse,



this Marvel (above) helps those with psychiatric and other mental health services. Her Zoom background is about as close as she can get to a beach vacation right now!



Don't let the trains fool you! This Masked Marvel (above) has serious responsibilities managing WCBH's Arborview residence in Newport, where she oversees the care of 16 adult clients, all living with serious mental illness.

If you work for West Central and have been wearing one of the many beautiful masks donated by a mask-maker in the community, send along a photo! ([hduncan@wcbh.org](mailto:hduncan@wcbh.org)) Tell us why you like your mask. And thank you all for wearing masks in public to help slow the spread of coronavirus.



The Masked Marvel (above) is the leader of West Central's Enhanced Care Team, in Lebanon. The Enhanced Care Program is a skills-based treatment team working to help clients living with a variety of diagnoses, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and Borderline Personality Disorder. There is a team-based approach, offering therapy, medication management, case management, and skills groups. His mask gives him hope for the eventual return of baseball and the freedom to move around the community again.

Who is this Masked Marvel? He is one of the great substance use disorder counselors at our Substance Use Services Clinic in

Claremont. This MM helps people "kick" their dependencies and get on with their lives - even when the evil coronavirus



has infiltrated the city. He likes his mask because it makes his "long fist form #7" even better!

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YES! I'D LIKE TO DONATE TO HELP NEIGHBORS GET THE MENTAL HEALTHCARE THEY NEED.

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## The Lasting Legacy of a Generous Friend

We are saddened at the passing of Dartmouth alumnus (Class of 1950) and former Dartmouth mathematics professor Richard E. Williamson of Norwich, VT, yet pleased to announce West Central was named a beneficiary of his estate. This bequest will enable us to continue to deliver much-needed mental health and substance use disorder services to the most vulnerable and marginalized community members among us. We extend our posthumous thanks to Professor Williamson for his foresight, generosity and thoughtful bequest, and our deepest sympathy to his family, many friends, and students around the Upper Valley region and beyond. Professor Williamson's obituary may be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/REWilliamsonobituary>.

To include West Central in your estate plans, please contact Dave Celone in our Development Office at [dcelone@wcbh.org](mailto:dcelone@wcbh.org).

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**Want to make an appointment? Call (603) 542-5128**

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## In The News — Why You *Shouldn't* be Social Distancing

Wait! Before you get too excited - you *DO* need to be staying away from people that are not in your household. But

"social distancing" is not required. *Physical distancing* is what you should be doing.

West Central's own Dr. Diane Rosten, Medical Director, penned an Opinion in the *Eagle Times* of Claremont.



Click the link below to read Dr. Rosten's Opinion, "Social Distancing is a Misnomer."

["Social Distancing is a Misnomer"](#)

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## **No Surprise — COVID-19 is Disproportionally Affecting Those with Mental Health Conditions**

Over 45 million Americans live with some sort of mental illness, and these turbulent times exacerbate their symptoms. With social distancing, treatment can be more difficult to get — at a time when it's most needed.

A disrupted routine can knock those living with chronic mental illness off balance, and potentially lead to self-destructive behaviors. While the virus may be mild for most, the constant news of infection and death tallies, tales of overwhelmed hospitals, and photographs of body bags and ambulances trigger fear and anxiety in most of us. But our levels of fear and anxiety are mild when compared to those living with mood and personality disorders. Isolation compounds these feelings. How can we help ourselves - or those we care for - cope with this crisis when living with anxiety, OCD, substance abuse, and other mental illnesses?

Recognize the signs. Some may include:

- Panic buying
- Searching for, trying, or buying "cures" (right now, there are none, and many of the "cures" touted can be dangerous to your health)
- Compulsive scrolling and fascination with current news
- Self-harm, weight gain/loss, repetitive behaviors or rituals, sleeping too much or too little

Things that may help:

- If you are on medication, continue your medication unless your doctor directs otherwise. This is *critical*.
- Reach out to your therapist and/or doctor and find out what treatment options they offer. Many (like WCBH) are offering teletherapy by phone or video
- Meditation, exercise and mindfulness practices
- Self-care and journaling
- Set simple goals (finish a project, take a walk)
- Look for positive stories
- Trust authoritative sources (like your doctor or the CDC, not a meme from Facebook)
- Talk to loved ones and friends who you feel are sensible, not inflammatory
- Join an online group or rediscover a hobby
- Stick to a daily routine - shower and dress
- Stay in touch with your therapist/counselor/sponsor/coach and supportive friends and family
- Remind yourself - every day - of the good that will come from maintaining your recovery

If you're trying to support someone struggling with mental illness at this time, listen carefully and let them know you care. Don't tell them to "get over it" or minimize their feelings. Don't try to "fix" it, but offer to help them find resources (such as teletherapy or an online support group).

**If you are afraid for yourself or someone you're trying to help, call our Emergency Services line (24/7) 800-564-2578. Do not leave someone alone if you fear they are a danger to themselves.**





2019 Report on Philanthropy

**Philanthropy**, published in print and online is our way of thanking our hundreds of donors and friends. It's now available to you by clicking on the link below...

Visit our 2019 Report on Philanthropy

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## Sharing This Newsletter Might Save a Life!

This newsletter goes out to all West Central staff (affectionately known as "Westies"!), our Board members, and many friends and supporters with our heartfelt thanks. Please share it broadly with your friends and family so people remember our name and the work we do as this region's community mental health and substance use center.

(for past newsletters [click here](#))

**When people in need know who we are,  
they'll contact us *when they need help.***



*Nurturing Dreams...Transforming Lives...*

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West Central Behavioral Health serves clients in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County, and has offices in Lebanon, Claremont, and Newport, NH. WCBH is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization.