

A Destination to Healing

New, Exclusive Treatment Center Opens at South Coast for Chemical & Pain Medication Dependency

Alcohol and drug addictions are progressive diseases, and if not treated can lead to death. In most people, addictions start slowly and grow to the point the individual's life becomes progressively unmanageable. As repeated efforts to gain control over the addiction fail, life for the chemically dependent person begins to unravel.

Alcoholism and drug abuse can destroy lives. Severe consequences are often present affecting the addicted individual's family life, social life, health, spiritual life, school or work relationships, and in many cases, legal problems can arise. Despite these problems, the addicted person continues to abuse drugs or alcohol. To stop the cycle of abuse and to regain health, professional help is often needed.

Pacific Coast Recovery Center Opens

Since the early 1970s, South Coast Medical Center in Laguna Beach has provided an exceptional recovery program for those people in need of treatment for drug and alcohol dependency. The program, originally named Genesis, has expanded its level of services and is now called Pacific Coast Recovery Center.

What's new about the program is its distinction in providing a specialized treatment track for adults who become dependent on prescription drugs in an effort to combat chronic pain. The problem of pain medication dependency among chronic pain patients is a growing national concern. And people from all races, genders and backgrounds are affected. Abuse of these legal drugs can occur at any age. Surprisingly, 18-34 year olds have been found to be as likely to experience chronic pain as the elderly. Overall, men and women have similar rates of prescription drug abuse. *Read the sidebar article on the "Dark Side to Treating Pain" for the personal story of a professional football player in recovery of prescription drug dependency.*

[PHOTO of DR. HEADRICK]

"Up to 20 percent of people using pain medication have the propensity to become addicted," says addiction specialist Daniel Headrick, M.D., medical director of Pacific Coast Recovery Center. "Taking too much pain medication can affect the brain in some people in a way that makes these individuals crave drugs they never dreamed of trying." That's why, according to Dr. Headrick, abuse of prescription drugs can lead to abuse of

“street drugs” such as cocaine, methamphetamine and even heroin. The brain doesn’t know the difference between street or prescription drugs.

Most drug treatment centers are not equipped to effectively deal with chronic pain dependency issues, and pain clinics tend to have less experience in chemical dependency recovery. However, Pacific Coast Recovery Center provides for all these services. Integrative treatment is offered to individuals with pain medication dependency as well as for individuals with addictions to street drugs or alcohol.

Treatment at a Glance

Pacific Coast Recovery Center’s treatment program is comprehensive and offers four levels of care:

Chronic Pain & Chemical Dependency Treatment Track

Prescription drug dependency is a major health concern in our society today. PCRC offers a medically supervised treatment program for those individuals struggling with chronic pain and medication dependency.

Inpatient Medical Detoxification

Our professional staff provide state-of-the-art treatment to ensure a safe and comfortable medical detoxification.

Inpatient Program

For some patients, 24-hour care in a safe, structured environment, away from the daily stress and pressure, is required to start the recovery process.

Partial Hospitalization Program

This program meets during the day from 9:30 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and patients live at home or in near by hotels.

Intensive Outpatient Program

Another flexible treatment option is the intensive outpatient program, which offers two condensed treatment tracks ... one in the evening Monday through Thursday from 6 – 9 p.m., and the other during the day Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Continuing Care

After care is an integral component of the last stage of the treatment. Patients are encouraged to participate in weekly support groups, at no charge, for as long as needed.

Family Program

Family participation is crucial to every patient’s recovery and is included in all levels of care.

Treatment Team's Expertise is Addiction Medicine

[PHOTO of TREATMENT TEAM]

Treatment team includes (sitting, left to right): Mary Gelb, Public Relations; Sherry Burditt, R.N., HN-BC, Program Director; Daniel Headrick, M.D., Co-Founder, Medical Director; Steve Collier, R.N., Co-Founder, Executive Director; and Lorrie O'Dell, CATC, Intake Coordinator. Standing, left to right: Ann Cervantes, R.N., Utilization Review; Michael Finch, CAS, CD Counselor; Tom Offerdahl, CATC, CD Counselor; and Irene Morales, LVN, CD Nurse.

A multidisciplinary team of addiction medicine specialists offers care in a compassionate, safe and confidential setting. Leading the team is medical director Daniel Headrick, M.D., who has more than 20 years of experience treating chemical dependency. Working closely with Dr. Headrick is addiction specialist Steven Collier, R.N.

Other experienced team members – all with intensive training in chemical dependency – include physicians, nurses, certified drug/alcohol counselors, psychologists, acupuncturist, a holistic health nurse, a massage therapist and recreational therapists. A majority of the staff is formerly affiliated with the hospital's original drug and alcohol recovery program, Genesis. This long-standing recovery program has helped thousands of people in the recovery process from drugs and alcohol addiction.

Spectacular Ocean-front Accommodations

South Coast Medical Center in Laguna Beach is unique in its location due to the fact that the hospital's front-yard is the beach. Spectacular, ocean-front views are visible from all patient rooms, offering a spiritually relaxing and reassuring place for healing.

Pacific Coast Recover Center's 32-bed unit is located on the fourth floor of the hospital. Private rooms are available, although most patients share a room. The atmosphere in the unit is breathtaking and features a free flowing, seaside setting. The exclusive casual elegance of Tuvalu furniture is featured as part of the coastal interior design. The center even has a private meditation room for patients to use, and of course it has an ocean view. Other luxuries include a Jacuzzi and massage room. The program includes daily physical exercise. With the ocean one block away, trips to the beach are included as part of treatment where patients can participate in peaceful yoga, meditation and other relaxation exercises.

Special Program Features

Since it's a hospital-based program, Pacific Coast Recovery Medical Center can also provide care to patients who may be medically compromised and in need of intensive nursing care.

The treatment program is comprehensive and includes:

- Medically supervised detoxification (featuring individualized tapering schedules using non-addictive prescription pain medicines thereby avoiding the “cold turkey” approach to detox)
- 30-day intensive rehab with 60 to 90 day aftercare programs
- Group therapy
- Individual therapy
- 12-Step groups
- Family therapy
- Spirituality groups
- Expressive therapy
- Pain management education
- Patient education on the biology of chemical dependency
- Nutrition education
- Men’s groups
- Women’s groups
- Physical therapy
- Therapeutic outings to destinations around Laguna Beach

There are many effective ways to treat pains besides the use of opiates. Alternative treatments featured at Pacific Coast Recovery Center include:

- Acupuncture and acupressure
- Relaxation exercises such as yoga and meditation
- Holistic therapies
- Amino acid replacement
- Bio-electrical medicine

Call for More Information Day or Night

Someone is ready to assist you 24 hours a day with providing information on the treatment program, insurance coverage and cost as well as admission requirements. If you or someone you love is in need of treatment for chemical or pain medication dependency, call today for help at 866-633-6787 (866-OFF-OP8S).

You can also visit the hospital’s Web site for more information at:

PacificCoastRehab.com

[SIDEBAR 1]

Dark Side to Treating Pain

Use of Prescription Pain Killers Can Lead to Addiction

Chronic pain can cause the best of us to seek out relief. Painkillers are often prescribed in treating pain resulting from a sports injury, an accident or after surgery. Although painkillers offer many benefits, non-medical use of prescription medications can lead to addiction or dependency, characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use.

What type of person can become dependent on prescription drugs? Anyone. People from all walks of life are affected by prescription drug dependency. CEOs of large companies, mothers of small children, senior citizens, athletes and even healthcare professionals are affected.

Here we will share the real life stories of two people, a professional athlete and a nurse, who have overcome prescription drug dependency. Their personal stories show how easily someone can fall into the serious, and sometimes life threatening, spiral of drug dependency.

Playing in Pain

Profile on Former Pro Football Player Jason Peter

[Photo of Jason Peter]

Photo caption: *Former NFL player Jason Peter of the Carolina Panthers turned his life around after suffering the harsh realities of prescription drug abuse.*

Football is one of the most physically demanding sports. Injuries are part of the game. Former professional NFL player Jason Peter of the Carolina Panthers lived with the physical pain of his profession on almost a daily basis. He says playing defensive tackle was like subjecting your body to a train wreck every play. That's the reality of playing pro football. An unfortunate reality for Peter was a dangerous and secretive dependency on prescription drugs to combat his pain that eventually led to a heroin addiction and suicide attempt.

Prized Player Turns Addict

Peter was a \$4 million, first-round draft pick with the Carolina Panthers in 1998. He played with the Panthers until the end of 2001 season. Before going professional, Peter played on

three national football championship teams at the University of Nebraska.

What ended up as an 80 Vicodin a day habit started out innocently enough at the University of Nebraska when Peter injured his knee in football practice as a college freshman. The team physician evaluated his injury and prescribed a pain pill.

“He gave me Loracet,” the now 31-year-old Peter says. “I took two of them and I was flying. It was a feeling that when it hit me made me want to feel this way forever.”

In college, Peter took pain pills every now and then but it never became a real concern until he reached the pro level, where players get hurt all the time. “I wasn’t abusing pain medication in college. I was naïve to the whole thing,” says Peter, who led a very clean life, free from drugs, as an athletic teenager growing up in a stable and loving family environment in New Jersey.

When Peter entered the pro level, playing in pain was an everyday thing. Experiencing many injuries and undergoing seven sports-related surgeries in his first three years in the NFL, Peter was accustomed to taking pain medication. He had no trouble getting the pills, which he often got legally through doctors, but not always in the most ethical ways.

“I’d meet doctors here and there at parties,” Peter recalls. “They loved having a team jersey hanging on the wall or a helmet sitting on their desk.” In exchange for these memorabilia items, Peter would get prescriptions from physicians for pain pills. Peter justified to himself why he needed the pain pills. “It was fine for me to take them because I was playing through a lot of injuries. I wanted to play and the team needed me on the field.”

However, by the time his pro football career ended in 2001 due to spinal injuries, Peter was talking up to 80 Vicodin a day. He had money in the bank, an unstructured schedule now that his pro career was over and he was still dealing with a lot of physical pain. Peter had no trouble finding the drugs he needed, legally or illegally.

Eventually the pain pills weren’t enough. And within two years of leaving the NFL, he graduated to crack cocaine, then heroin. Life continued on a spiral downward. Peter fell so far into depression and despair that he attempted suicide. He survived his attempt and finally admitted he was ready for help.

Choosing Recovery & Life

After several stints in rehab for his drug addiction, Peter found himself under the care of addiction medicine specialist Daniel Headrick, M.D., in 2004. His time in treatment with Dr. Headrick, the medical director of newly opened Pacific Coast Recovery Center at South Coast Medical Center, proved to be the foundation to his successful recovery today.

“Dr. Headrick is the best,” says Peter. “He has been instrumental in helping me get off the drugs. He was always very honest about what you can expect during the recovery process. He really emphasized finding balance in your life. And also the fact, that he can provide you with his expertise, but you still need to do your own work. Recovery is a struggle and not always comfortable.”

Thankfully Peter has achieved a healthy balance in his life today, free from drugs. Recovery is a life-long commitment and he continues to work on staying healthy with the support of a life coach, therapist and medical doctor. He is writing a book about his experience and was recently featured on a HBO sports production on abuse of prescription medications in athletes. Peter is even back on the football field. Not as a player, but as a volunteer high school football coach.

Open and honest with his past, Peter takes any opportunity to educate the kids he works with about the dangers of prescription drugs as well as the use of street drugs. “Hopefully if they can see what can happen, it might change their thinking on ever taking drugs in the first place.”

[SIDEBAR 2]

FREE Lecture

“Alternative Treatments to Managing Chronic Pain

Wednesday, December 6 ... 6:30 to 8 p.m.

South Coast Medical Center Community Room

31872 Coast Highway, Laguna Beach

Guest Speaker: Addiction Medicine Specialist Daniel Headrick, M.D.

RSVP: Call (949) 499-7202 or register online at SouthCoastMedCenter.com

According to the American Academy of Pain Medicine, chronic pain afflicts 50 million people worldwide, and acute pain is the most common reason people seek medical attention. Many people use prescription painkillers to treat the pain. However, there are other treatment options available that take a more holistic approach, including acupuncture and meditation. Guest speaker Daniel Headrick, M.D., will address the use of prescription drugs for controlling pain as well as alternative treatments.

[SIDEBAR 3]

Why Are People Abusing Prescription Drugs?

Although most patients use their prescription medications as directed by their physicians, about 10 to 20 percent of users abuse or become dependent to the prescription drug. Today millions of Americans are using prescription medications for non-medical purposes. Many misuse prescription drugs for recreation and psychic effects in order to get high, to have fun, to get a lift or to calm down. Misuse can also occur in those individuals who initially use the drug for legitimate medical reasons, but find after time, they abuse or become addicted to the medication.

While many prescription medications can be abused or misused, these three classes are most commonly abused:

Opioids

Often prescribed to treat pain. Examples include Vicodin, fentanyl, Oxycontin, Loracet and Norco.

Central Nervous System Depressants

Used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders. Examples include Valium, Klonopin and Xanax

Stimulants

Prescribed to treat disorders such as narcolepsy and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Examples Dexedrine and Ritalin.

If you are struggling with a drug dependency (prescription or “street” drugs), call Pacific Coast Recovery Center for help at 866-633-6787 (866-OFF-OP8S).