**DRAFT FOR REVIEW**

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**MOBILE ADDICTION TREATMENT UNIT WILL SERVE CAROLINE COUNTY, PROVIDING MEDICATION ASSISTATED TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDERS**

***Mobile Service Will Be Available to Help Those in Caroline County in Need of Addiction Treatment***

**DENTON, MD and BALTIMORE, MD. *--*** On April 2, health and addiction treatment officials from the Caroline County Health Department and the University of Maryland School of Medicine will launch the Eastern Shore Mobile Care Collaborative (ESMCC), a mobile system designed to provide state-of-the-art treatment for opioid disorders for those in need in the Caroline County-area.

The program will be comprised of a Mobile Treatment Unit (MTU) designed to increase access to care by providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) for individuals with opioid use disorders in underserved rural communities.

 “***With this new service, we can now reach those in need and provide important addiction treatment to individuals in some of the most rural parts of the county, where there is limited transportation and access to care,***” said **Scott T. LeRoy MPH, MS**, Caroline County Health Officer. “***This mobile care unit will be able to serve our residents that are most in need of these valuable services.”***

The 36-foot unit, which will be onsite at the launch, is equipped with medical supplies and telecommunication devices and will be staffed by a nurse and peer recovery specialist. The MTU is linked via encrypted, HIPAA compliant videoconferencing technology to an addictions medicine specialist at the School of Medicine in Baltimore, who will provide point-of-care diagnosis at the initial visit and monitoring during follow-up visits at the Caroline County Health Department.

Experts will be available to discuss the program and how the MTU will work.

This mobile unit is part of a bigger program across the state to address the growing need for addiction treatment in rural parts of Maryland, using a combination of on-site care and telemedicine to treat addiction disorders and provide necessary guidance for on-going care and counseling.

The ESMCC builds upon a commitment among local health officials and UMSOM addiction experts to provide service to those in need in the most rural parts of the state.

The service provided in the MTU will be a combination of on-site diagnosis and treatment with medication assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction via telemedicine to patients located on Maryland’s eastern shore.

The telemedicine program will be administered by **Eric Weintraub, MD**, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, who is the Medical Director of the UMSOM’s Methadone Clinic in the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) Outpatient Addiction Treatment Services and **Christopher Welsh, MD**, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, who is the Medical Director of the UMMC Substance Abuse Consultation Service and Medical Director of the UMMC Outpatient Addiction Treatment Service.

“***With telemedicine, we can treat those in need of addiction treatments in the most rural parts of the state, where often times services are not available. Our telemedicine program has been successful in other parts of Maryland and we think this combined mobile service in Caroline County makes treatment even more accessible as we tackle opioid disorders***,” said Dr.Weintraub.

Dr. Weintraub and Dr. Welsh have been providing similar services in Western Maryland for the past three years in collaboration with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS). Through this program Dr. Weintraub and Dr. Welsh and other faculty can prescribe buprenorphine via their telemedicine program. It involves a video consultation and collaboration with counselors and others treating the patient locally

**A Serious Addiction Issue**

This new service in Caroline County is a critical addition to the services needed as Maryland faces increasing opioid-related deaths. According to the Maryland Department of Health, there was a 14.8 percent increase in opioid-linked deaths during the first half of 2018 from 2017, a trend that has been in place for several years. The bulk of these deaths is linked to fentanyl use, a high-potency synthetic opioid.

Rural counties have experienced opioid-related deaths. Importantly, medically assisted treatment with drugs such as methadone and buprenorphine — considered the evidence-based treatment of choice for managing addiction — is not always available to those in rural areas. The ESMCC aims to address the problem by providing these importing treatments with the MTU.

Funding for the Eastern Shore Mobile Care Collaborative at Caroline County Health Department was made possible by Health Resources & Services Administration; University of Maryland School of Medicine, State of Maryland Behavioral Services Administration and the Caroline County Health Department.

**About the Caroline County Health Department**

The Caroline County Health Department, a local office of the Maryland Department of Health, is dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the lifelong Health and Wellness of our County's residents and environment.

The Health Department provides a wide array of public health services including behavioral health support, same-day substance use recovery services and prevention services for residents and other clients. To learn more visit https://www.carolinehd.org.

#### About the University of Maryland School of Medicine

Now in its third century, the University of Maryland School of Medicine was chartered in 1807 as the first public medical school in the United States. It continues today as one of the fastest growing, top-tier biomedical research enterprises in the world -- with 43 academic departments, centers, institutes, and programs; and a faculty of more than 3,000 physicians, scientists, and allied health professionals, including members of the National Academy of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences, and a distinguished recipient of the Albert E. Lasker Award in Medical Research.  With an operating budget of more than $1 billion, the School of Medicine works closely in partnership with the University of Maryland Medical Center and Medical System to provide research-intensive, academic and clinically-based care for more than 1.2 million patients each year. The School has over 2,500 students, residents, and fellows, and more than $530 million in extramural funding, with most of its academic departments highly ranked among all medical schools in the nation in research funding. As one of the seven professional schools that make up the University of Maryland, Baltimore campus, the School of Medicine has a total workforce of nearly 7,000 individuals. The combined School and Medical System (“University of Maryland Medicine”) has an annual budget of nearly $6 billion and an economic impact more than $15 billion on the state and local community. The School of Medicine faculty, which ranks as the 8th highest among public medical schools in research productivity, is an innovator in translational medicine, with 600 active patents and 24 start-up companies. The School works locally, nationally, and globally, with research and treatment facilities in 36 countries around the world. Visit medschool.umaryland.edu/

Learn more about the UMSOM’s addiction and treatment services:

[**UMMC Outpatient Addiction Treatment Services**](https://www.umms.org/ummc/health-services/psychiatry/services/outpatient-addiction-treatment)
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