Good Afternoon,

My name is Matt Brown and I am the Chief of Staff to the CEO at Addiction Recovery Care. Thank you for allowing me the time to share with you about our organization and our efforts to treat those with substance use disorder.

First off, congratulations! You all have done great! In its annual report published yesterday, the Office of Drug Control Policy stated that for the first time since 2013, there was a statewide drop in overdose deaths. Fatal overdose rates dropped nearly 15% between 2017 and 2018. Van Ingram, Executive Director, credited the drop to education, treatment programs, and other harm reduction initiatives. It seems as though we have won one round in this fight against substance use disorder and the opioid epidemic, but we still have more fighting left to do.

Addiction Recovery Care operates a network of residential and outpatient treatment centers located across 12 Kentucky counties. With 34 locations, we offer a full continuum of care including:

* Withdrawal management
* Crisis stabilization
* Residential treatment
* Sober living
* Outpatient services, and
* Vocational training

We know that treatment for substance use disorder requires a holistic approach that treats the entire person. Our program combines the best practices of medical care, clinical services, spirituality, and vocational training.

* Our medical services are overseen by a board-certified Addictionologist, Dr. Michael Fletcher. Dr. Fletcher is on the KY Board of Medical Licensure. He is the current president of the KY Chapter of ASAM.
* Our clinical program consists of licensed clinicians and peer support specialists utilizing national best practices including Hazelden Betty Ford’s COR-12 program. Targeted Case Managers provide wrap-around services, identifying and walking the client through removing barriers to recovery.
* Our various vocational training opportunities allow a client to discover a purpose for their life and the opportunity for meaningful employment. Our multi-phase approach allows for clients to receive appropriate treatment for each level of care, based on individual ASAM scores.

Addiction Recovery Care also has a facility dedicated to substance use disorder treatment for pregnant and postpartum women. A woman can come to Karen’s Place Maternity Center at any point in her pregnancy. She can stay at the facility through delivery and up to six months postpartum along with her child. By stabilizing the pregnant woman, we have dramatically decreased the number of days that the child must be admitted to the hospital post-delivery. Clients can learn to be mothers while also learning how to become and remain sober.

Addiction Recovery Care’s proprietary “Invitation to Destiny” curriculum is an all-inclusive life skills program designed to dismantle a client’s barriers to recovery. The workbooks, driven by the Targeted Case Manager, will allow the client to address all aspects of their life. The curriculum teaches clients how to be successful in these areas including:

* Exercise and nutrition
* Self-esteem
* Building identity
* Safe and stable housing
* Furthering your education
* Vocational training
* Home economics
* Financial literacy
* Parenting
* Anger management
* Setting boundaries
* Overcoming codependency
* Spirituality

Addiction Recovery Care’s innovative “Crisis to Career” approach combines world-class substance use disorder treatment with vocational training to bring an almost unheard-of level of success to those that complete our entire 12-month program. Those that have completed the entire Crisis to Career treatment program are showing over an 80% success rate, with success being defined as in recovery and employed. A person can come to an Addiction Recovery Care facility in crisis and by the end of the 12-month program, be suitable and prepared for meaningful employment in a variety of tracks. This vocational training component has been a game-changer for many of our clients. One client stated, “I couldn’t even get a job at a fast food restaurant before I came to ARC. Now I have a job where I can support myself and my family. I didn’t know that this was possible for someone that was as bad as I was.”

Our innovative approach has received national attention. The United States Department for Health and Human Services recently commissioned a study to find the best organizations nation-wide that were helping those on government assistance transition to tax-paying citizens. We were one of the first programs in the nation selected to be part of this BEES Study. (Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for low income families). This study, over the course of three years, will follow clients through the vocational training piece of the program and follow up with them after they graduate. We also believe that this study will allow for more organizations across the country to adopt our approach and further fight the current drug epidemic.

Across the country, prison populations are steadily declining, but that isn’t the case in Kentucky. Instead, for the last three years the state’s prison population has increased. Each year, the population has been the highest it has ever been. Due to the high population, state inmates are being housed in badly overcrowded local jails that were not meant to hold inmates for extended sentences and do not offer the same vocational, educational, and substance abuse treatment as state prisons. Kentucky stands to spend $628 million on its Department of Corrections in the current fiscal year.

One of our newest, and most innovative, programs was designed to help fight this problem. Our Court Concierge Program allows for a peer support specialist to be in a courtroom and on-call for the judge, jailer, and sheriff’s office. Working with the judicial system, the Court Concierge can assist those that have entered the criminal justice system to enter treatment at the time of arrest or from jail. The person is placed in the appropriate level of care based upon ASAM criteria.

In our first pilot program in Letcher County, 82 men and women have been able to enter treatment rather than continue in jail. Judge Kevin Mullins has seen the impact that treatment can have on a person in addiction. Through this program Letcher County is saving money on jail costs, reducing census in an overcrowded jail, and helping those in the community that suffer from substance use disorder find the help and treatment they so desperately need. This collaborative partnership between

* Mountain Comprehensive Health Care Corporation,
* Appalachian Regional Healthcare Hospitals System,
* The Letcher County Sheriff’s Office,
* Judge Kevin Mullins,
* Addiction Recovery Care, and
* Many other community partners

will prove to be a model for how we can slow incarceration rates and give people the much-needed treatment that they deserve.

Kentucky has been hit incredibly hard by the opioid epidemic. The DEA report published by the Washington Post earlier this week shows the millions of pills that were flooded into our communities by drug manufacturers. It was heartbreaking seeing the high concentrations in our cities and knowing the individual lives, families, and communities that were so horribly affected. It is only right that the best solutions come from the areas that were so highly affected. We are losing an entire generation of Kentuckians. There is no community, workplace, or family that has remained untouched by this epidemic.

It is imperative that we find a solution to the growing incarceration and recidivism rates. Addressing substance use disorder as a disease instead of a criminal problem will stop recidivism and allow for those with substance use disorder to step out of the cycle of addiction and incarceration. By treating these individuals, providing vocational training, and offering meaningful employment, we could drastically reduce our jail and prison populations. In addition to saving tremendous amounts of money, we could be saving the lives of those in our communities, workplaces, and families.