

(left to right: Dr. Paul Bonucci, Ariel Pozzi, Cory Kramer)

For Cory Kramer, an advanced practice registered nurse at Perry Memorial Prompt Care, treating patients with opioid use disorder (OUD) is more than a job.

"I had a personal friend who died from an overdose, so both my personal and professional experience has guided me to help others," he said.

Kramer works closely with Dr. Paul Bonucci, who opened the clinic—now part of Perry Memorial Hospital—in 2011. Dr. Bonucci quickly realized treatment for OUD was a significant community need.

Kramer and Ariel Pozzi, a licensed clinical social worker, are dedicated to making sure their patients recover, which typically takes a year-and-a-half. The process starts with Suboxone, a prescription medicine used to treat OUD.

"I want to empower patients through counseling to help them move forward in their life," says Pozzi. "We identify life stressors and provide options on how to help them function positively when the stressor pops up."

Bureau County, where Perry Memorial Hospital is located, has one of the state's highest rates of emergency room cases of opioid use/poisoning, surpassing the average for all rural Illinois communities of 25.9 cases per 10,000 people.

"Opioid addiction is not easily understood by the general public," Bonucci notes. "Cory's energetic ability to relate well to patients and Ariel's involvement in counseling is a compliment to Perry's commitment to meet the needs of the community."

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