

Help is key to positive outcomes

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY HERALD

Not a day goes by when one doesn't hear something about the rapid increase in use of prescriptions and non-prescription opioid medications. Living in a rural community, many people feel a certain amount of insulation but Dr. Eric Morse, owner and CEO of Morse Clinic of Roanoke Rapids, said opioid addiction is everywhere — even small town America.

While most people envision an addict as someone who chooses a certain lifestyle, Morse and his program director Arthur Payne said, of their patients, about half have a history of acute or chronic pain. They started out with a prescription and pain medication and found themselves facing consequences they didn't understand until it was too late.

"The doctor didn't tell them it was habit forming and within just a week or two (the patient) couldn't get off them (opioids)," Morse said. "It was an accident."

Payne explained in the Roanoke Rapids area, based on their patients, it is believed one in 10 people are facing this dilemma. He said practically everyone, in every walk of life in this area, knows someone with an addic-



Morse Clinic recently received a \$2,000 gift from NC Rents employees Jim and Gayle Garrett to aid in continuing programs for the clinic. Pictured are Program Director Arthur Payne, left, Dr. Eric Morse and the Garretts.

tion to opioids.

"That's what all our patients say," Payne noted. "They tell us they have friends and family going through the same thing."

He said the clinic has treated more than 100 patients in the past year and that "success rate" depends on your definition.

"There are many doors to this problem," Payne said. "Most (patients) are sick of

their way of living and are willing to consider this level of treatment. They are sick and tired of being sick and tired but most can't tolerate withdrawal for 24 hours."

Located in the former Patterson Mansion, Morse and Payne clarified the Morse Clinic is nothing like one would see on TV. It's a safe space, where patients are treated with respect — and so

are the counselors.

"I don't believe we've ever had an incident here," Payne said. "If you just walk in the door, you see the facility is lovely. It's not what you think of for an opioid treatment clinic. It's not what you see on TV or in the movies."

The two expressed their gratitude to building owners Jim and Gayle Garrett, who

have been so welcoming to have this kind of work in their facility.

The Patterson Mansion, 608 Jackson St. in Roanoke Rapids, was built by town progenitor, Sam Patterson. The facility has a history of opulence and was the site of many a soiree from the time it was built in 1919, according to Jim.

"It was the largest private residence in Roanoke Rapids," said Jim, who took ownership in 2017.

He explained that when he bought the place it was only about 25 percent full. Today, it is 75 percent occupied.

"We have a lot of experience managing the property," he said. "That made a difference. This is what we do. The exterior is exactly the way it was in the beginning, except that the parking area was formerly a garden. The building adjacent to it was the old Carriage house and was the garage of this building. Since then, it too has been converted into offices."

The Garrett family has freshened the place up considerably, which included substantial work on the front columns.

"You have maintenance on a house — especially a big building like this," Garrett

said, noting his appreciation for the Main Street Program and their guidance on how to restore and preserve.

Garrett mentioned Roanoke Rapids has the second largest historic district on the east coast and it is imperative to preserve local history. He also mentioned he believes housing a facility like the Morse Clinic is in keeping with Patterson's original goals for the city — his benevolence in building hospitals, schools and helping those in need.

In keeping with that benevolence, the Garretts presented a gift of \$2,000 to the clinic to help with its endeavors.

"It's in support of the program because I believe in the services they offer," Jim explained. "I have seen how it has benefited the community. I want to see to it they continue the good work they do."

Morse and Payne expressed their gratitude for Garrett's responsiveness to their needs as tenants and for the family's contribution to their work.

There are seven Morse Clinics located in Henderson, Syler City, Northern and Eastern Wake County, Zebulon, Dunn and Roanoke Rapids. For more information, call 252-541-4175.

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