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Connected Care: How COAST's Network Supports Every Step of Recovery

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When someone struggling with substance use disorder reaches out to the [COAST](#) support line, that phone call marks just the beginning of their journey. COAST stands for Coordinated Opioid and Stimulant Treatment program; a 24/7 network of substance use specialists across eight counties in the Greater Capital District Region and Hudson Valley. But it's much more than an emergency response system. During that initial call, a moment of courage becomes a point of connection for lasting recovery.

COAST functions as a gateway to comprehensive, long-term support that extends far beyond addressing urgent medical needs, connecting individuals to a carefully coordinated network of specialists equipped to address the complex, evolving challenges that make up the recovery process. "It's not just the range of services that a person can be connected with," explains Dorothy Cucinelli, CEO of Capital Behavioral Health Network, which operates COAST. "It's the way they're connected. I think that really makes a difference and that makes this program unique."

This coordinated approach ensures that each person receives individualized attention tailored to their specific circumstances, eliminating the fragmented care that often leaves people struggling to navigate complex systems alone. "The way COAST is structured, there's an immediate sense of trust built between the person calling and the person receiving that initial contact," shares Keith Stack, CEO of [Addictions Care Center of Albany](#). "It's more welcoming. It's nonthreatening. And there's a sense of trust that, 'I'm going to get care here and I'm not being judged.'"

Laura Combs, Executive Director of [New Choices Recovery Center](#), agrees. "So many times things like this are started and then there isn't real follow through, or nobody really answers the phone and provides the services that they say they're going to provide. COAST has consistently provided those resources. Somebody answers the phone or calls back very, very quickly and they provide the resources that people are looking for."



When it comes to substance use disorder treatment, response time and approachability are critical. COAST meets people where they are, connecting people who might never find their way into traditional treatment systems. This is done with the help of certified peer recovery advocates, individuals with lived experience who offer unique insight and understanding. The Addictions Care Center of Albany and New Choices Recovery Center are just two of COAST's many funded partners across the 8-county region that employ certified peer advocates, serving as crucial components of the care process.

"COAST is really touching individuals who are beginning outside the normal treatment structure," Stack observes. "The peer relationship is one of identification. So there's an immediate level of trust built, then the ability to make those connections with other services. Finding those other needs that they have beyond just health care, all those critical needs that make recovery possible. And within the COAST network, all of those services in one fashion or another are available."

Recovery encompasses far more than just addressing substance use. People seeking help often face interconnected challenges that can include housing instability, employment barriers, and legal issues. COAST facilitates direct, personal introductions rather than simply providing contact information, ensuring successful connections between callers and service providers. "It's not a passive connection," explains Kelly Lane, Director of Regional Projects for CBHN. "They're making the connection person to person."

Both Addictions Care Center of Albany and New Choices Recovery Center demonstrate the comprehensive nature of [COAST's partner network](#) through their extensive service offerings. [Addictions Care Center](#) of Albany provides a full continuum of residential care including stabilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration services, as well as transitional housing. Their outpatient services encompass intensive programs, individual counseling, medication-assisted treatment, and specialized support for justice-involved individuals, while their Community Oriented Recovery Empowerment (CORE) program delivers trauma-informed care throughout Albany County.

[New Choices Recovery Center](#) offers an equally broad spectrum, spanning substance use prevention programs and community education, outpatient treatment clinics, a methadone program, reintegration residences, and multiple house options. Both organizations integrate certified peer recovery advocates throughout their services, ensuring that individuals receive support from professionals with lived experience at every stage of their journey. Says Combs, "It's a continuous feedback loop between them and us about what the issues are and what the needs are."





The collaborative structure that underlies COAST demonstrates how organizations can achieve far more working together than they could individually. This partnership approach allows each provider to contribute their specialized strengths while participants benefit from the collective expertise of the entire network.

“With COAST and the network approach, the collaboration of providers is so important because we can meet folks in that time of crisis, but then as that crisis is resolved, really support the different levels of care that they need throughout that recovery journey,” explains Lane. “It’s not a one-size-fits-all approach, and I think the peers do an incredible job of identifying what the right approach might be for that individual based on their relationship and connecting individuals to Addictions Care Center of Albany, New Choices Recovery Center and all of the other organizations that we have in the network. It’s really incredible to see.”

COAST has established a reputation for consistent, person-centered care that providers can confidently recommend. “It really is the reliability and consistency,” says Stack. “If our staff are making a referral through COAST, they’re very, very confident that there’s going to be a response and a positive outcome.”

Across the COAST network, people come first. For Combs, helping those in crisis always starts in the same place: “Trying to be responsive to the need in the moment, to try to keep the person engaged and try to get them to the next step with the number one goal of keeping people safe and alive. If we start there, if we can at least do that for this person today, then we can figure out the rest.”

Recovery can be challenging, but no one has to face it alone. The path forward begins with a phone call to (866) 930-4999. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, [COAST](#) connects callers across eight counties to the resources and relationships that can transform their lives. If you or a loved one are in need, help is only a phone call away.

COAST is funded by a grant from the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports and coordinated by Capital Behavioral Health Network, an independent practice association of 30 mental health and substance use organizations that serve the Greater Capital District Region, parts of the North Country and Hudson Valley in NY.

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