

ALLIANCE NEWS



Alliance for Better Communities

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Just when you thought you heard it all! Excerpts from Mother Jones Article

Just when we think that you cannot fall any lower—BOOM—new bottom. Here we are in the midst of an unprecedented opioid epidemic claiming upward of 72,000 lives in 2018 across the United States. That's how I felt after reading "Mom, When They Look at Me, They See Dollar Signs," an article authored by Julia Lurie and published in the March/April 2019 issue of *MotherJones* magazine. The investigative report delineates how rehab facilities and rehab brokers have enriched themselves by "trapping some users in a vicious cycle of dependence and exploitation."

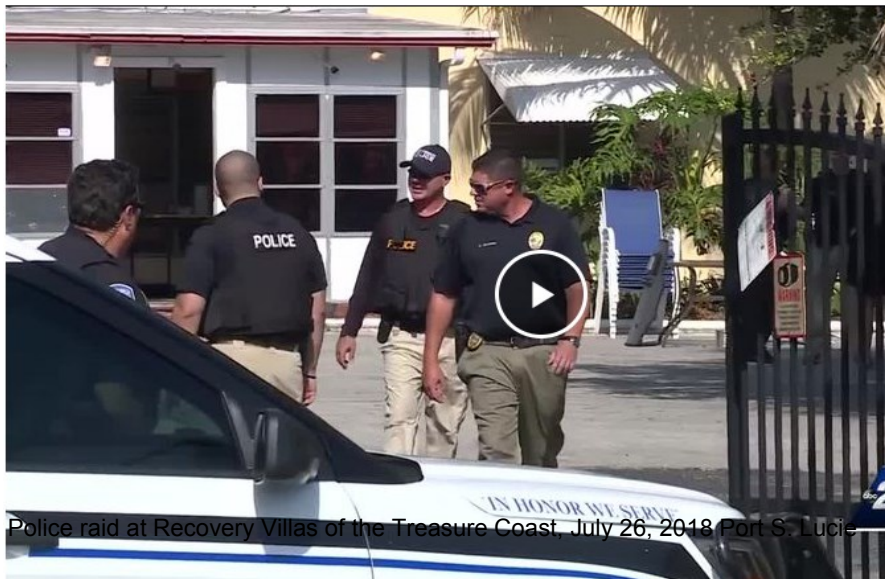
Over the past decade, opioid addiction rates have soared and severely strained

existing rehab facilities' capacity. Lines for detox and treatment are long and the desperation of persons with addiction and their family members is palpable—rightly so since 160 individuals from Jefferson County died between 2008 through 2018.

Here's how this despicable practice works: re-



Photo of Recovery Villas of the Treasure Coast - Port St. Lucie,



Police raid at Recovery Villas of the Treasure Coast, July 26, 2018 Port St. Lucie

Vision: To have a community that is fully committed to the health and safety of its residents.

Mission: To reduce underage drinking and substance abuse and expeditiously address any emerging threats.

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cruiters/brokers who are often themselves current or recovering opioid users troll social media platforms, NA meetings, and websites dedicated to family members of people with opioid addictions, to help the desperate to enter detox and treatment. However, the recruiters/brokers will aggressively recruit these vulnerable souls not out of the goodness of their hearts but to reap a profit by exploiting them. Some recruiters are "...paid \$5,000 to \$12,000 for each client admitted, which breaks down to about \$500 an hour." As one recruiter stated, "We're being lured by the treatment centers, and the clients are being lured by us."



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<https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2019/02/opioid-epidemic-rehab-recruiters/>

For the most part, these rehabs, unlike New York State-licensed rehabilitation facilities, “...exist in a quasi-medical realm where evidence-based care is rare, licensed medical staffers are optional, conflicts of interest are rampant, and regulation is stunningly lax.” Can you imagine presenting yourself for medical care at a clinic or emergency room where there are no trained medical staff to provide you with evidence-based care? Despicable! Of course not all rehab facilities in Florida and Southern California operate in this dishonest fashion but a sufficient number do, and they will exploit the patients and their families for every last insurance penny.

According to Lurie, “As of 2012, only six states required addiction counselors to have a bachelor’s degree, according to a report from the Center on Addiction. “The regulatory requirements for nail technicians are higher in many states,” according to Emily Feinstein, the center’s executive vice president. “In California, which has among the nation’s loosest rehab regulation, aspiring counselors must do little more than complete a nine-hour orientation (good for five years) before working in state-certified treatment centers, and anyone can open a sober home just by hanging out a shingle.” These rehab facilities operate their own urine-testing labs, order several tests per week for each patient, and charge insurers hundreds of dollars per test.



Even when desperation is at its worst, we have to ensure that our loved ones enter reputable rehab facilities. ◀

Here are 7 Ways to Find a Good Rehab Facility:

1. Figure out who you’re talking to. When you call, confirm that the person who answers actually works at the facility and isn’t just a hotline operator.
2. Ask for a list of full-time staffers. Many rehabs have medical providers who come in for just a couple of hours per week. Seek out an organization with a published, complete list of its full-time providers, including a medical director, nurses, and licensed counselors.
3. Check with state regulatory agencies. Look online to see if complaints have been filed against the facility or its staff members.
4. Beware free stuff! It’s illegal for a rehab or patient recruiter to offer perks such as flights, rent, food, cash, or drugs to potential patients.
5. Go big! Seek out treatment centers associated with large medical institutions, such as a local hospital chain.
6. Find out whether the facility offers medications. Drugs such as buprenorphine and methadone can facilitate recovery for opioid users whereas programs based on an abstinence-only model tend to have higher relapse rates.
7. Make sure the facility is accredited. A seal of approval from CARF or the Joint Commission isn’t a guarantee of quality, but not having one could be a red flag.

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DIRECTOR ANITA OPPOSES DECRIMINALIZATION

Watertown Daily Times

Serving the communities of Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis counties, New York

Project Director of the Alliance for Better Communities Anita K. Seefried-Brown, who has worked on issues of sex trafficking and addiction in the north country, thinks the proposal does not address the underlying problems of sex trafficking.

"I would see that as a cheap solution," she said. "So many other things would need to be in place."

Ms. Seefried-Brown thinks the state should focus on the root cause of why so many vulnerable people — people of color, LGBTQ people and immigrants — wind up engaging in prostitution.

"What I think we really need to work on first is discrimination and many social ills," she said.

"Until, I think, we have a good understanding of what contributes to prostitution, what contributes to sex trafficking, I'm not sure how we can adequately protect individuals in the sex trade."



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COUNTY LEGISLATURE VOTES TO JOIN OPIOID LAWSUIT

Jefferson County committee approves
proceeding with opioid lawsuit



Watertown Daily Times

Serving the communities of Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis counties, New York

WATERTOWN — For the second time in the last six months, the Jefferson County Legislature's Health and Human Services committee voted on Tuesday to join most of the other counties in New York in suing the manufacturers of opioids. The vote of the committee will have to be approved by the full Board of Legislatures before any action is taken.

The lawsuit is designed to recoup the costs of prescription drug abuse, overdose and addiction. Committee member Robert D. Ferris voted against the resolution, which was otherwise unanimous.