

## Wake County detox center remains open as addictions increase due to COVID-19 stress

By [Ed Crump](#)

Tuesday, May 12, 2020 10:09PM

RALEIGH, N.C. (WTVD) -- If you are not surprised to hear that liquor store sales are up during the pandemic then you likely won't be surprised to hear that issues with addiction are also on the upswing.

Chris Budnick, the executive director of Healing Transitions said that's because "financial stress, stress associated with being isolated, those things can contribute to a rise in addiction."

The addiction recovery center has both men's and women's campuses in Raleigh.

But when the pandemic hit, the number of residents at those facilities had to be cut in half.

"We're probably going to be operating at a reduced capacity for a while just because we don't have the ability to do social distancing when we're at normal capacity," Budnick said.

But that wasn't the only dilemma.

Healing Transitions is also the only shelter in Wake County that provides on-site detoxification.

That service couldn't continue to operate at the shelters, so it had to be shut down.

Budnick said that had a domino effect.

"Taking away a crucial resource like this for first responders means that it places an additional burden on emergency departments and jails."

But Budnick proudly noted a Wake County healthcare collaborative quickly organized and came to the rescue.

The group--Alliance Health, Wake County, North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services, WakeMed, RelyMD and Southeastern Healthcare--managed to provide a place for a detox center within days of the shutdown.

Amy Brucia with Healing Transitions helps run the detox unit.

She said despite COVID-19 restrictions, there have been success stories in recent weeks.

"We're able to take people that want help, be able to safely detox them here and then discharge them somewhere that's also safe to get them on their road to recovery," Brucia said.

Some are going to other recovery facilities, and some are going into what are called "healthy hotels", local hotels rented by Wake County.

"Our goal is transfer them back into our program once we open back up. And so hopefully that would be around mid-June," Brucia said.

But like most other businesses or organizations, Healing Transitions is still trying to figure out just what things will look and feel like once they can resume operations.