

SUBOXONE TREATMENT CENTER  
(a/k/a MCI Shirley)

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by Timothy J. Muise

The masterminds employed by the department of correction have now solved the crime and recidivism problem that has plagued the state for decades now! The cure to the problem is the wonder drug suboxone. Now this synthetic drug is usually used to treat heroin addiction but the crack correctional staff here at MCI Shirley has discovered that it has many other uses as well. This wonder elixer apparently is the answer to the myriad of complex problems in the system. It is the new "opium" of the people (sadly replacing religion). Now there is no official policy on this criminology breakthrough - the DOC is keeping it all real hush hush - but I am privy to the breakthrough because I live here at MCI Shirley.

Each and every day I see the men here, medicated to the gills, walking up and down the walkways with their DOC currency: U.S. postage stamps to pay for their daily dose of oblivion. The guards are on board with this new department wide treatment plan as they play deaf-dumb-and-blind (the dumb part is real easy for them to do) to the so-bo shuffle. The prisoners abandon all thoughts of programming, education, religion or any other positive outlet: this saves the DOC vast sums that they can reinvest in salaries for new deaf-dumb-and-blind turnkeys. The treatment protocol, let's call it suboxone therapy, also does wonders for security issues as no one has the energy to plan an escape or sharpen a knife. The day of the MCI ShirleyWorld convict is spent hustling up stamps and then seeking out there next dose of the pumpkin orange colored cure all. They seek this holy grail of mind numbing

modern science, no thought of their future or reentry, falling squarely into the trap of their captors: the assurance of their return to prison and the assurance of future jobs for their captors.

Suboxone therapy has turned these prisons into a sort of free range methadone clinic where there are no lines or set hours. You can get your dose without waiting and at the appointment of your choice. You could come out at medication call and bolster your dose with some klonopin that just came out of someones mouth. You could fly out at movement time and trade your five books of forever stamps for a corner of an orange pill. The choice is yours. The only real down side is that you are ensuring your return to prison, but if you like the therapy why would that be a problem?

For a man like me, who has been clean for quite sometime, it is sad to sit back and watch this madness. If the taxpayers could see what their hard earned dollars are actually paying for. The guards look at this suboxone epidemic as a chemical babysitter. Their jobs are so much easier with the prisoners medicated into a state of numbness. The block I live in is like a small insane asylum, men doing the suboxone shuffle to and from the cops desk to talk the latest sports. You could not believe the crowd gathered at the block door just prior to medication call. You would think they were giving out gold bars up there. I get so frustrated as I know some of these men, and they are good guys, they are just caught up in that trap of addiction and the DOC has placed a boot across their throat in the form of these

chemical straight jackets. I know they can be so much more and I will do what I can to steer some of them away from the DOC's plan of certain failure.

Of course this little piece is a tongue and cheek but it is very close to the truth. The prison system has degenerated into one of true despair and hopelessness. Men are never afforded the opportunity for self-realisation, which is the true definition of rehabilitation, and take the path of least resistance: one of mind numbing/altering substances to escape the despair that causes so many to choose suicide. Addiction is just as deadly as suicide, just slower, and it is no less tragic. The system is all about jobs for state employees. The system is all about keeping men in these cages as they are a real and valuable commodity.

The suboxone therapy crisis is just a symptom of the overall failure of ignoring the rehabilitative mandate here in the commonwealth. They do not want to take any money away from the salary portion of the budget (at last count salaries took up \$362,000,000.00 of the \$517,000,000.00 budget) to invest in employment training, further education, and pre-release opportunities: the essential elements of rehabilitation and successful reentry. Until there is a public outcry for safer streets and a reallocation of the half-billion dollar per year corrections budget the stellar employees here in the department of correction will keep embracing the suboxone therapy madness as a means to an end. They will continue to ignore the smuggling of drugs

into institutions because it benefits their bottom line. You will be subjected to ever increasing violent crime and social decay and maybe someday one of your loved ones, one of your children, will fall victim to the crime epidemic or end up as a prisoner in the Shirley Suboxone Treatment Center. The time is now to get involved in the movement to effect change. Please get involved.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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