

INFORMATION RELEASE
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When Juneau's COVID-19 quarantine facility opened last year, Bartlett & CBJ implemented a unique protocol. Now, a peer-reviewed journal is praising the innovation.

In October 2020, the City and Borough of Juneau Emergency Operations Center (EOC) opened Centennial Hall as a COVID-19 quarantine and isolation facility. The goal was to prevent the spread of the virus amongst vulnerable populations, which would have led to high rates of hospitalizations. Most individuals using the facility did not have permanent housing and many had severe alcohol dependence. To counter the potentially severe effects of alcohol withdrawal and reduce withdrawal-related hospitalizations, Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH), Capital City Fire/Rescue (CCFR), and CBJ developed a Managed Alcohol Program that administered alcohol to individuals. Now, Juneau is being featured in a peer-reviewed research publication for its "innovative" response.

["Managed alcohol: one community's innovative response to risk management during COVID-19"](#) was published December 6 in [Harm Reduction Journal](#). The article highlights how Juneau "recognized the complexity and potential risk to individuals experiencing structural vulnerability related to homelessness and a severe AUD [alcohol use disorder], and the community at large, and was able to create an alternative path to minimize those risks using a harm reduction strategy."

CBJ Chief Housing Officer Scott Ciambor serves as the lead for the EOC Quarantine and Isolation Task Force. He managed the isolation program at Centennial Hall: "There are hundreds of logistical details necessary to safely house people on an emergency basis for 10-14 days. Implementing the Managed Alcohol Program was one of the most crucial."

Early on in the planning stage for a public quarantine and isolation facility, Jeanette Lacey knew addressing alcohol withdrawal was necessary. Lacey is BRH Incident Command System Patient Tracking Unit Leader.

"We needed to ensure our good intentions didn't cause unintentional harm with life-threatening, severe alcohol withdrawal, often requiring multi-day hospital admissions. And, we needed to meet medical and basic needs of the individuals to encourage people to voluntarily stay in an isolation facility for 10 or more days to prevent community spread," explained Lacey. "I am incredibly proud of our community for how quickly everyone pulled together and the innovation, collaboration, and dedication across so many groups."

The program administers alcohol to individuals through a physician-approved protocol which, according to Dr. Tim Quigley Peterson, developed organically and through collaboration. Peterson is CCFR's Medical Director.

"The intake form asked how many drinks a day it takes for the individual to not get sick. The general answer range was 5-7. So we asked: 'Why not give enough alcohol to prevent withdrawal?' I wrote the initial protocol, consulted with Dr. Lindy Jones, and then with the team that included BRH to make further adjustments on implementation. Teamwork and collaboration were key," Peterson said.

Though Centennial Hall is no longer used as a COVID-19 quarantine and isolation facility, the managed alcohol program is still in place for individuals referred to isolation at hotels.

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