



## 2013 SYNC Review

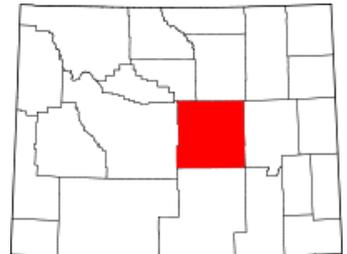
Natrona County Court Supervised Treatment Program

500 South Wolcott

Suite 100

Casper, WY 82601

307-235-2000



**Coordinator:** Clara Orr (corr@natronacountydrugcourt.com)

**Established:** 2002

**SYNC Evaluation Date:** November 4-6, 2013

**Total Clients Interviewed:** 11 (6 Male and 5 Female)-Clients ranged in age from early 20's to mid 50's; other participants not interviewed ranged to the 70's. Of the 11 clients interviewed, four participants were in Phase 1, two participants were in Phase 2, two participants were in Phase 3 and three participants were in Phase 4.

### **Court Information Summary:**

The Natrona County Court Supervised Treatment Program for adults is unique in its structure, in that the program has all treatment services and supervisory services in one location. They have two officers from the Casper Police Department voluntarily assigned to the program for a period of two years. These officers assist in the intensive supervision of the clients, among other duties. The Natrona County Probation Office also voluntarily assigns two probation officers to the program for a period of three years. Finally, individual and group treatment providers for the Natrona County program are located in the same office as the officers and administrative staff. This model is unique in the state. The court

follows the national 10 key components/standards. The clinical team summarizes their philosophy well to their clients; “Breathe and Don’t Use”.

Average Participation: 60 clients

Recidivism Rate for FY 13: 4%

Retention Rate for FY 13: 95%

**Eligibility:**

Clients are evaluated utilizing the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) to determine level of care. If the client scores at level three then residential treatment is recommended prior to initiation of drug court. The client is also assessed on the ASAM and is given a DSM V diagnostic code. Misdemeanor and felony charges are accepted. Clients move from district to circuit court.

**Financials:**

Treatment court funding is determined by number of participants and requires a 25% match. The client cost is \$1100.00 and must be kept current in order to progress through the levels.

**SYNC Review Areas:**

*Access to Services:*

- Single Point of Entry has helped make access to the program easier for participants.
- Having all of the main program staff (administrative, probation, treatment) under one roof makes accessing services very convenient.
- Some clients felt that the wait time for beginning the program was lengthy. The average time for approval to program start is 2-3 weeks.
- Clients felt that the information given to them regarding the program, and what it would entail, was overwhelming but well done by staff. They knew what to expect as participants.
- Some clients feel that it is difficult to find employment as some employers do not want to give individuals a second chance. The perception is “once an addict, always an addict”.

*Quality of Services: “Accountability is key” is the statement of success for this treatment court participant.*

- By following the 10 key national drug court standards, they ensure a consistent level of quality that is very effective.
- Some of the treatment staff have personal experience dealing with addiction, which allows them a unique and valuable connection with the clients.
- Clients did not feel there was a stigma or any discriminatory actions towards them as participants of the treatment program, from staff or the community.
- The 18-month minimum time and 4 level structure is beneficial to clients in establishing their sobriety and building healthier life habits, while receiving varying levels of treatment and supervision. The average participation time for clients is 18 months.
- The points system allows for objective transitions between levels.
- The use of sanctions and incentives are individualized based on a team decision.

*Coordination of Services:*

- The program having treatment and supervision under the same roof allows for optimum coordination between the two, as they are accessible throughout each day.
- Weekly staff meetings assist in additional coordination by all program areas to ensure client information and interests are being well represented.
- The program staff have a network of groups, organizations and employers who are familiar with the treatment program and are willing to work with their clients, whether through community service or employment opportunities.
- The location of the treatment court allows clients to have access to AA meetings in the same building (1224 Club).

*Strengths:*

- Natrona County has a large number of resources outside of the treatment program, such as AA groups, community activities and public transportation, which are very helpful for participants.
- The current judge presiding over the treatment program is very supportive and takes an interest in each participant.
- Participants are fully aware that they may come back to visit staff or attend some group sessions after their completion of the program.
- Requiring that clients who have not already earned a GED or high school diploma do so is tremendously impactful in providing more employment opportunities after they graduate.
- The administration, treatment and supervisory staff hold a primary focus on the successful program completion of each client, so they are willing to listen to the ideas of one another even if their current position leads them in a different direction.
- The clients are very aware and very appreciative of the open door policy/approach that the treatment program staff have.
- Each client is celebrated each time in court for their accomplishments.
- Level IV (Aftercare Program-six months in length) was added to the program which has made a positive impact on clients to sustain their sobriety.

- One client summarized the strengths of this program very well by saying, “It is saving people”.

*Concerns/Areas of Growth:*

- Clients thought some of the groups were not as effective as others. They felt that at times there was unstructured discussion at certain group sessions.
- Casper Police Department and the Natrona County Probation Office assign officers to the treatment program. It is reported that departmental staff have a limited understanding of what occurs in the treatment court system. Better communication and education to these entities would only benefit the continued success of the program.
- The county court system can get backed up at times and processing/approving potential clients can be greatly delayed. This is particularly true in felony cases.
- There is a lack of affordable, transitional and low-income housing in Natrona County and many rentals have drug charge restrictions. This makes it difficult for some clients to secure appropriate housing.
- There was some concern of the consistency and timeliness of the morning color calls for UA’s. Some clients felt like they were risking tardiness for work or other planned events because the calls were being made later than they were supposed to be.

*Recommendations/Requests:*

- Continue efforts to educate the community on what ‘Drug Courts’ are and the services that are provided.
- Continue building relationships with employers and organizations in the community to provide the best resource base possible for clients.
- Evaluate the current programming for group sessions and update them where and when possible. If clients cannot relate to the information, it will not stay with them as effectively.
- Continue the strong and respectful relationship that exists between administration, treatment and supervision. There is currently a great primary focus on the clients and their success.
- Provide as much consistency with the morning color calls as possible to ensure that clients are not going to risk being late for work or other scheduled plans.
- Continued state support to cover costs of CARF survey expenses.

*Overall Impression:*

The Natrona County Court Supervised Treatment Program is successful because of the quality of the staff, ability to house treatment and probation/supervision within the same office and the

guidelines and procedures they have developed for their clients. They understand addiction and the unique challenges their clientele face. They work hard to provide a consistent and high-quality program while individualizing and meeting client needs as appropriate. Many of their clients come back to visit after graduation because of the bonds they form with the staff. More work could be done to better educate the community and county on what the program does, and continuing to coordinate effectively with the court system and community resources is strongly suggested. The clients of the treatment program spoke very highly of the staff and general opportunities that the program allowed them, although they also understand the much of their success relies on their own choices and decisions to change their previous behavior. Overall, this program is functioning extremely well and is making a difference in the lives of their clients through a productive partnership of staff and clients who have the attitude that “you have to do the work”.