

## Behavioral Health News

Neighborhood News – April 2023

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### STAR (Smart Technology Authorization Review)

The Behavioral Health Department is excited to share that in Q2 of 2023, Optum will be launching a new authorization technology called STAR. The STAR process aims to simplify and enhance the authorization process, decrease administrative workload, and improve the overall provider experience.

Here are some of the key features of the STAR process:

- Concise and consistent questions with the potential for immediate approval, which will reduce the time and effort needed for authorization requests.
- Empowering providers and patients to make decisions related to length of stay medical necessity, thereby improving the quality of care.
- Early identification of high complexity patients, enabling early intervention and management of complex cases.
- Introducing collaborative case management, which will help to ensure that patients receive timely and appropriate care.

We believe that the STAR process will significantly improve the authorization process, and we look forward to sharing more information about it soon.

### Recovery Connections Centers of America, Inc. Closure

With the recent closure of the Recovery Connections Centers there have been many individuals who have been left without adequate care and medications. The Rhode Island Department of Health has established a bridge prescription hotline 1-401-606-5456 for anyone who needs an immediate prescription. They can also go to <https://bhddh.ri.gov/substance-useaddiction/licensed-treatment-providers> for more information.

### Xylazine Emerges in the Illicit Drug Supply\*

*\*The information below is derived from studies by the Brown University School of Public Health and presented at the Governor's Overdose Prevention Task Force*

**Xylazine commonly goes by the street name “tranq” or “tranq dope.” It has been part of the RI Drug supply since 2020 however an increased prevalence has been noted over the past two years.**

- 2022 test results have found Xylazine in approximately 37% of all fentanyl samples submitted by Rhode Island law enforcement
- Xylazine was found in nearly 40% of counterfeit opioid pills tested in 2022 by RIDOH's Forensic Drug Chemistry Lab
- Xylazine is a long-acting medication used as a veterinary tranquilizer (not an opioid and not approved for human use)
- It has been found in the local drug supply in Rhode Island in combination with substances containing fentanyl
- Xylazine can increase the risk of overdose and cause drowsiness, unresponsiveness, slow heart rate, and decreased breathing