

# New Vision To Treating Addiction

*Owings Mills native joins two others  
in opening center for recovery.*

by Zach Snitzer  
Community contributor

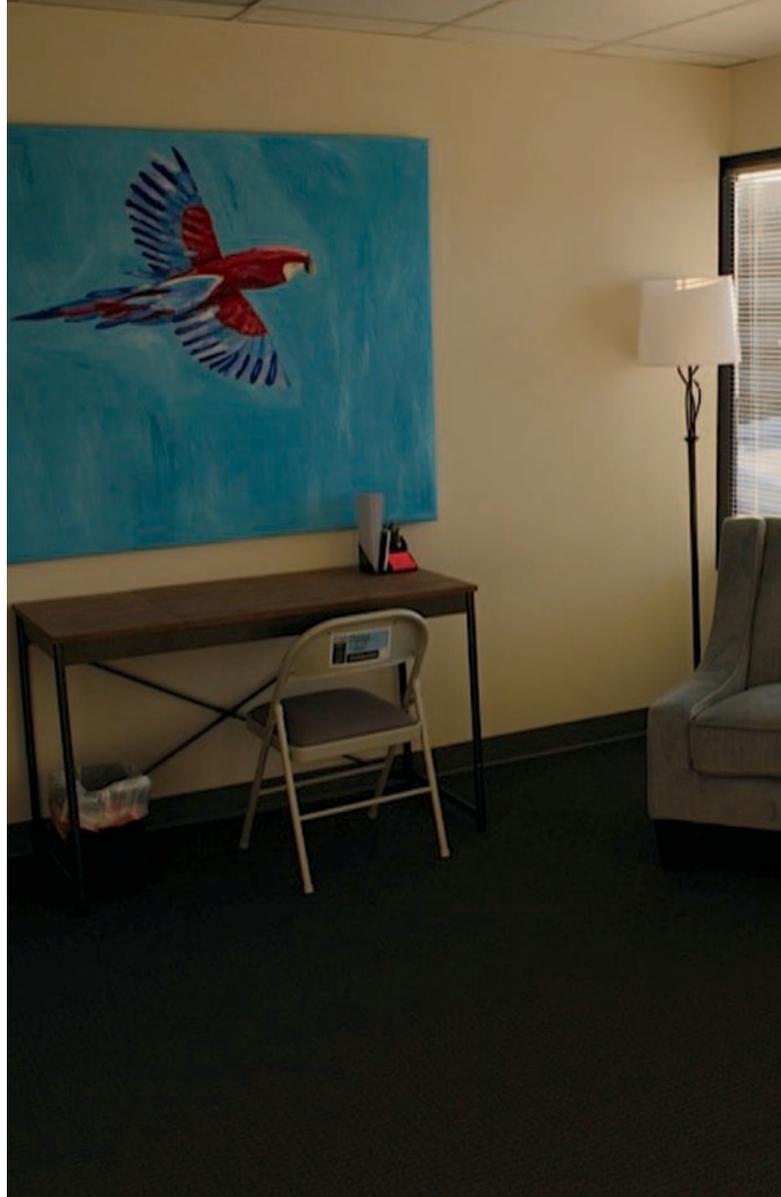
**M**aryland Addiction Recovery Center, a new comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment center located in Towson, is the creation of three close friend — all in recovery from substance abuse — who had a vision to bring an innovative style of addiction treatment to the Baltimore area. This innovative, comprehensive approach to treatment focuses on long-term, sustainable patient outcomes in recovery through a coordinated continuum of care services.

Aura Arslanian, Sam Bierman and Zach Snitzer were all in early recovery from drugs and alcohol back in 2007 when they began to enthusiastically discuss the many ideas they all had if ever they were given an opportunity to open their own drug and alcohol rehab center.

“At that point it really was just a pipe dream,” said Snitzer, who was born and raised in Owings Mills. “We were all enthusiastic about recovery and were excited and hopeful about the future and we were just sort of talking about bad past rehab experiences we all had gone through and what we would do to make it better if we ever got a chance to do something like that.”

Later on, all three worked for addiction treatment centers during their time living in Delray Beach, Fla., the self-proclaimed “Recovery Capital” of America. Snitzer worked in admissions at The Watershed, while both Arslanian and Bierman took jobs working directly with the patient populations at the same treatment facility before moving on and working at Caron Renaissance in Boca Raton, Fla. Arslanian, who is married to Snitzer, left Renaissance while pregnant with their first child. Bierman moved up in the company, first working directly with patients, then to running the medical office to finally becoming the director of operations of Caron Ocean Drive, the organization’s executive treatment facility that opened in 2012. It is this further experience that made the three understand much of the innovative, comprehensive treatment approaches taking place in South Florida was lacking up north.

“I knew that the environment I was working in was much



**The patient lounge area and patient vocational work stations at the Maryland Addictive Recovery Center are shown. The center, located in Towson, uses an innovative, comprehensive approach to addiction treatment that focuses on long-term sustainable patient outcomes in recovery through continuing care services.**

Photo courtesy of Maryland Addictive Recovery Center

more forward-thinking and innovative than a lot of what was going on where I was from,” stated Bierman. “I grew up in New York on Long Island. I went to treatment in New York and I knew what was going on down in the addiction treatment industry in South Florida was more innovative and progressive than the treatment I experienced in other states.

“This style of comprehensive treatment, of getting underneath the drug use to the addiction issues and the causes and conditions, of examining pathologies and family structures and being able to do real time clinical interventions, this is how addiction treatment should be.”

Snitzer’s own personal experience of addiction and running the gamut of local treatment centers and rehabs made him keenly aware that some of the unique approaches taking place in South Florida treatment centers didn’t necessarily extend up the East Coast.

“I had started using drugs at around 12 years old recreationally and that quickly escalated,” Snitzer explained. “I lost friends that died from the drug lifestyle. Overdoses. Violence.



three friends in recovery to the need they found in the Baltimore area for high quality, comprehensive addiction treatment. MARC is a solution that the three hope will make drug and alcohol treatment both affordable and accessible to those in need.

“I have lost some very close friends to drugs and alcohol and this is just one way to try and give back to those who are suffering from addiction and also their families,” explained Arslanian, who grew up in Manhattan and, like Bierman and Snitzer, got sober in South Florida.

**“Addiction doesn’t just affect the person using drugs or drinking. It also affects their families, their parents, their siblings, their spouses, their kids.”**

— Aura Arslanian

“Addiction affects the community. It affects everyone it touches,” she continued. “We really wanted to bring a type of drug and alcohol treatment to this community that could offer something in a way of a solution that also affected everyone involved positively. We want to offer help for the patient, for their family, for their employer, for the community as a whole.”

Maryland Addiction Recovery Center currently offers varying levels of outpatient services, from outpatient detox, PHP (Partial Hospitalization) day treatment, intensive outpatient (IOP) and outpatient treatment to family treatment, group and individual therapy, DUI/DWI Education and Prevention programs and anger management. The center treats adults and offers a separate adolescent IOP they’ve branded as “Recovery After 3”, meaning addiction treatment after school for teens.

Bierman, MARC’s executive director, detailed the purpose of the teen program.

“Teens are using drugs at younger and younger ages now,” he said. “They are getting in trouble at school and at home and we found a need to be filled in the area to provide more comprehensive drug and alcohol treatment for the teens. This program allows the parents to be more intimately involved in their children’s treatment, lets the kids still go to school and get the education they need, and saves the family time and money by not having to send their child to a year-long program out of state or an intensive wilderness program.”

The group’s long-term vision is to have a true, comprehensive “Florida Model” style of treatment in the Baltimore area, where clients would get the full, long term care they need in starting their journey of recovery from drugs and alcohol. The “Florida Model” (a term coined from a treatment model popular in South Florida) has separate clinical and residential “campuses” which benefit the client in treatment by allowing them to slowly be integrated back into their daily lives through different treatment phases.

Also, the benefit from a treatment perspective is that this model allows the staff to watch over clients at all times in each different setting and clinically intervene when necessary in real time. It offers practical benefits like vocational and life skills

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I lost close friendships because of my drug use. I lost the trust of my family. I stole their piece of mind. I stole and robbed and used people. I sold drugs to support my habit. I was full of anxiety and fear and I lost my self-esteem and self-respect.

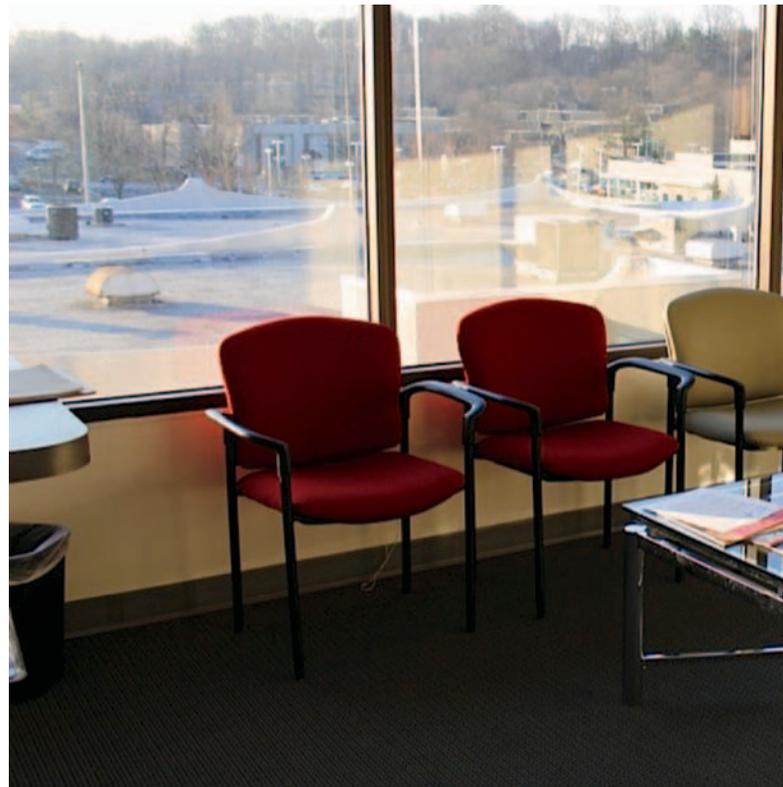
“I paid prices for my addiction because drugs were the only thing that worked for me, they were the only thing that allowed me to feel OK, to live day to day. And along the way I went through many different treatment centers and none of them were providing treatment the way I saw it was being provided when I eventually got clean and sober in Florida.

“In Baltimore, it was usually ‘come see the doctor, take a Suboxone, sit in a group and listen to people complain, then out the door.’ Sometimes there was education about drugs, but every person doing OxyContin or cocaine or heroin already knows drugs are bad.

“That’s why ‘Just Say No’ wasn’t effective. Treatment has to be more. It has to examine every component of a person’s life. It has to look holistically at the person. It has to offer solutions to meet the patient where they are at in terms of their own addiction and their own recovery.”

Addiction is classified as a disease by the American Medical Association as well as many other medical and scientific organizations. It is a progressive illness that requires treatment. Maryland Addiction Recovery Center was the answer of these

The Maryland Addiction Recovery Center recently opened in Towson. The long-term vision of the owners is to have a true, comprehensive “Florida Model” style of treatment in the Baltimore area. Clockwise, from top left, the entrance and waiting area; a banner hangs inside the building; the main hallway at the center; a therapist’s office; the center’s web site and Facebook page; MARC owner Zach Snitzer, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Deputy Director DAvid Mineta and MARC owner Sam Bierman; MARC treatment services consultant and former Baltimore County drug czar Mike Gimbel poses with Mineta. Photos courtesy of Maryland Addiction Recovery Center



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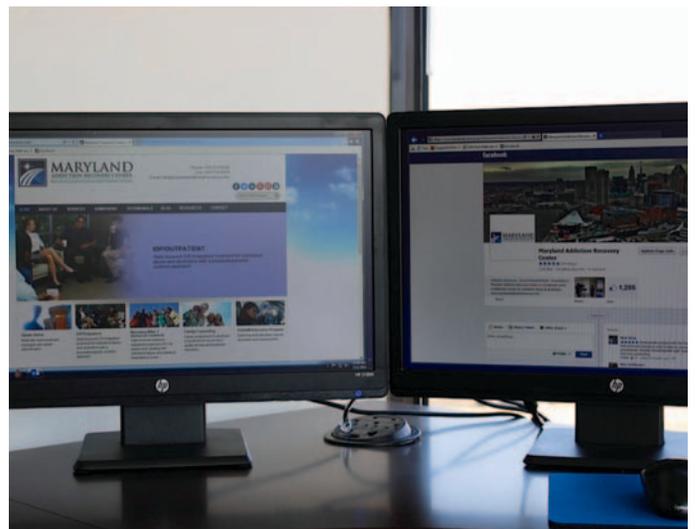
building that inpatient hospitalization programs cannot and supports a more long term model of treatment. Studies have demonstrated that the longer a person suffering from addiction stays in treatment and is engaged with a treatment team, the better the recovery outcomes tend to be.

The “Florida Model” also offers benefits to families. Instead of passing a child or a spouse from one organization or rehab to a different one as they go from detox to inpatient to outpatient, this model gives the family members one voice to speak with during the entire process. The model supports the client as they pass through levels of care, all designed to continually address addiction and underlying issues and slowly integrate them back into a regular life as a productive member of society. It also engages the family, who often are in need of some help themselves after dealing with their loved one in addiction for so long.

“We truly believe this area of Maryland is perfect for this type of model of treatment,” said Bierman. “The need is certainly here. We have one of the worst drug problems in the country. And it’s not just the homeless or the indigent that suffer. That is just shortsighted or uninformed to think that. Every sex, race, religion and socioeconomic class deals with these issues. Addiction and alcoholism doesn’t discriminate. A truly comprehensive, coordinated treatment approach that is individualized for each client is key in treating the illness that is drug addiction and alcoholism.”

“I am a drug addict in recovery,” Snitzer concluded. “I hurt my family and my friends and my community. I selfishly took from this area for a longtime. This is one way of me giving back to the community. And this really is a problem that is everywhere. This is not a Baltimore City problem. Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County are all dealing with terrible drug issues. It’s rampant in our high schools. Addiction is a big issue and we’re just trying to do our part in offering a treatment solution that is sorely needed.”

For more information on Maryland Addiction Recovery Center and the services they offer, visit the organization’s web site at [marylandaddictionrecovery.com](http://marylandaddictionrecovery.com) or call 410-773-0500.



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