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PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

Substance abuse treatment a must

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Kudos to the Daily News for running a Lexington Herald-Leader editorial last Saturday highlighting the increasingly urgent need to make access to substance abuse treatment a top priority in the commonwealth.

“Most important when talking about the drug scourge is the inclusion of mental health and substance use disorders among essential health benefits,” the editorial stated. “As a result, health insurance sold on Kynect and other insurance exchanges must cover drug treatment.”

Apparently a lot of folks in Kentucky are still in denial regarding the substance abuse epidemic currently ravaging our state. Worse, many still cling to the uninformed and just plain ignorant notion that substance abuse is a choice rather than a disease.

We have to face the facts. Substance abuse is not an individual problem, it is a societal crisis. Moreover, most of the people who desperately need access to treatment simply do not have the resources necessary to pay for it.

Those who live in a fantasy world where everyone is either a “maker” or a “taker” seriously need to be brought back to reality.

Everyone afflicted with this horrible malady deserves access to mental and physical health care services. It shouldn't matter if he or she lives in a gated community or under an overpass.

All addicts should be provided immediate and affordable (free, if warranted) access to treatment. What they do not need are condescending lectures on morality and economics from their self-righteous and typically better-off neighbors whose approach to any challenge typically involves blaming the victim.

“If the law is allowed to work as envisioned,” the editorial concludes, “Kentuckians who are ready to commit to treatment no longer will be consigned to a long waiting list that pretty much guarantees they'll be using again before their names come up.”

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