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Amid growth spurt, Wallingford's Aware Recovery Care raises \$1.5M from CI



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Aware Recovery Care CEO Brian Holzer.

By Greg Bordonaro

Wallingford-based in-home addiction treatment provider Aware Recovery Care announced it has raised \$1.5 million from Connecticut Innovations, the state's quasi-public venture capital investor.

Aware Recovery, founded in 2011 by Stephen Randazzo, said the new funding round will help it expand its services to more patients, and lead to greater collaboration with state government entities, accountable care organizations, physician groups and self-insured employers.

This isn't Aware Recovery's first investment. In 2021, it announced it raised "significant growth investment" from New York City-based private equity firm Health Enterprise Partners. Terms of that deal weren't disclosed.

Private equity-backed Aware Recovery's in-home addiction treatment program bucks treatment norms in both environment and length.

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A team of providers — including peer coaches, therapists, nurses and others — works with patients in their homes and on their schedule, over an average of seven months, but treatment could go as long as a year, Aware Recovery Care CEO Brian Holzer said Wednesday morning.

Treatment starts with intensive daily meetings and then slowly tapers off as clients build the confidence and support systems they need to function on their own.

The company has seen significant growth since its founding. It now operates in 11 states and employs around 600 people, including 150 in Connecticut. About 80 to 90 jobs are corporate positions, while the rest are largely direct-care employees who go to patients' homes, including certified recovery advocates or peer coaches, and licensed clinicians like nurses, physicians and

social workers.

Holzer said in each market the company operates in, it negotiates a bundled payment arrangement with commercial insurers, which agree to pay the company a set price for its services. That's in contrast to the traditional fee-for-service model used in health care.

Patients access Aware Recovery's treatment program through their employer-issued health plan. Anthem was the first insurer to support the company's business model in 2016, which led to significant growth. Anthem now has bundled payment deals with Aware Recovery in eight states, Holzer said.

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"This is really the only example, to our knowledge, of a true concierge model of care that's available through employer-sponsored insurance coverage," Holzer said.

Holzer, who is a medical doctor, took over as Aware Recovery's CEO in 2022, replacing founder Randazzo, who now chairs the company's board.

Aware Recovery on Wednesday also announced two new additions to its senior leadership team. Roy Sasenaraine has been named chief operating officer, and Kara Gaylord is the senior vice president of business development.



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