

Amity San Diego Expands Comprehensive Dual Diagnosis Treatment as County Reports 21% Drop in Overdose Deaths

Coastal addiction treatment center offers specialized care for co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders in response to growing community need

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As San Diego County celebrates a significant 21% decrease in overdose deaths in 2024, Amity San Diego (<https://amitysd.com>) is expanding its comprehensive [dual diagnosis treatment](#) programs to address the complex needs of individuals struggling with both addiction and co-occurring mental health disorders. The specialized treatment center, part of the Amity Behavioral Health Network, is responding to growing demand for integrated care that treats the whole person, not just the addiction.

While San Diego County saw 945 overdose deaths in 2024—a decrease from 1,203 deaths in 2023—the numbers still reveal a persistent crisis, with fentanyl and methamphetamine continuing to be the leading causes of death. Research shows that approximately 50% of individuals with serious mental disorders are also affected by substance abuse, and 29% of people diagnosed with mental illness also abuse either alcohol or drugs.



"Every person who comes to us carries more than just an addiction—they carry trauma, pain, anxiety, depression, and often years of feeling like no one truly understands their struggle," said Patrick Santosuosso, CEO & Co-Founder of Amity Behavioral Health Network. "We don't just see someone with a [substance use](#) disorder. We see a human being who deserves comprehensive care that addresses every aspect of their healing journey. When someone is battling both addiction and mental health challenges, they need a treatment approach that recognizes these conditions don't exist in isolation—they're deeply interconnected, and recovery requires treating both with equal attention and compassion."

Addressing San Diego's Dual Diagnosis Treatment Gap

Nationally, only 6-12% of individuals with substance use disorders receive specialty treatment in any given year, with about 21.6 million people needing treatment but only 2.6 million receiving it in specialty facilities. In San Diego County, this treatment gap is particularly pronounced for individuals with co-occurring disorders, who face unique challenges in finding integrated care that addresses both their mental health and addiction simultaneously.

Amity San Diego's dual diagnosis program fills this critical gap by offering evidence-based treatment that recognizes the complex relationship between mental health disorders and substance abuse. Common co-occurring conditions treated at the facility include depression with alcohol use disorder, anxiety with stimulant addiction, PTSD with opioid dependence, and bipolar disorder with poly-substance abuse.

Comprehensive Dual Diagnosis Treatment Model

Amity San Diego's approach to dual diagnosis treatment involves integrated care plans that address both conditions from the moment clients enter treatment. The facility offers Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP), providing flexibility for individuals who need intensive treatment while maintaining some connection to their daily lives.

Core services include:

Integrated Medical and Psychiatric Care: Board-certified physicians and psychiatric professionals collaborate to manage withdrawal symptoms, medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and psychiatric medications simultaneously.

Evidence-Based Dual Diagnosis Therapy: Individual and group therapy sessions using proven modalities like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and trauma-informed care specifically designed for co-occurring disorders.

Holistic Healing Programs: Recognizing that recovery involves healing the whole person, Amity San Diego incorporates yoga, mindfulness meditation, fitness programs, and nutritional support to address physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

Trauma-Informed Care: Understanding that many individuals with dual diagnosis have histories

of trauma, all treatment approaches are designed to create safety, rebuild trust, and empower clients in their recovery journey.

Family Involvement and Support: Educational programs and family therapy sessions help loved ones understand both addiction and mental health challenges while building healthy support systems.

The Science Behind Dual Diagnosis Treatment

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, the rate of dual diagnosis recovery is radically better when co-occurring disorders are treated simultaneously, with sustained rates of recovery being significantly better when mental health and substance abuse treatment is rendered from the same source.

Traditional [addiction treatment](#) that doesn't address underlying mental health conditions often leads to higher relapse rates because the root causes of substance use remain untreated. Similarly, treating mental health disorders without addressing substance abuse can be ineffective because continued substance use interferes with psychiatric treatment and medication effectiveness.

"The old model of treating addiction first and mental health second, or vice versa, simply doesn't work for most people with co-occurring disorders," explained Santosuosso. "When someone has been using substances to cope with untreated depression or anxiety for years, you can't take away their coping mechanism without giving them healthier alternatives and treating the underlying condition. Our integrated approach ensures that as we help someone achieve sobriety, we're simultaneously giving them the mental health tools they need to maintain that sobriety long-term."

Meeting San Diego's Diverse Community Needs

San Diego County's diverse population requires culturally competent care that addresses the unique needs of different communities. Recent data shows significant disparities in overdose deaths, with men dying at nearly three times the rate of women (40.9 vs. 13.3 per 100,000). Amity San Diego's treatment approach acknowledges these disparities and provides culturally sensitive care that recognizes how factors like discrimination, historical trauma, and socioeconomic challenges can contribute to both mental health disorders and substance abuse. The facility's staff includes clinicians with expertise in treating diverse populations and understanding how cultural factors impact both the development of co-occurring disorders and the recovery process.

Ocean-Side Healing Environment

Located in San Diego's coastal environment, Amity San Diego leverages the therapeutic benefits of the Pacific Ocean setting to enhance the healing process. Research has shown that natural environments, particularly coastal settings, can reduce stress hormones, improve mood, and enhance the effectiveness of addiction treatment.

The facility's location provides clients with access to beach therapy, outdoor mindfulness activities, and the calming effects of ocean sounds and sea air—all integrated into comprehensive treatment plans that address both addiction and mental health disorders.

Addressing Stigma and Barriers to Treatment

One of the significant challenges facing individuals with dual diagnosis is the compound stigma associated with both addiction and mental health disorders. Many people avoid seeking treatment due to shame, fear of judgment, or misconceptions about recovery.

"We work every day to break down the barriers that prevent people from getting help," said Santosuosso. "There's still so much stigma around both addiction and mental health, and when someone is dealing with both, they often feel twice as much shame. We want every person in San Diego County to know that having a co-occurring disorder doesn't make you weak or hopeless—it makes you human, and it makes you someone who deserves comprehensive, compassionate care."

Insurance Accessibility and Financial Support

Recognizing that financial barriers often prevent individuals from accessing dual diagnosis treatment, Amity San Diego accepts most major insurance plans and works with clients to verify coverage for both addiction treatment and mental health services. The facility's admissions team provides free pre-assessment consultations and is available seven days a week to help individuals navigate insurance verification and treatment options.

Community Impact and Future Outlook

As San Diego County continues to address its substance abuse crisis, facilities like Amity San Diego play a crucial role in providing the specialized care needed for individuals with complex co-occurring disorders. The integrated treatment model not only improves individual outcomes but also reduces healthcare costs, decreases emergency room visits, and helps rebuild families and communities affected by addiction and mental health challenges.

With County officials emphasizing that "overdose deaths are preventable, and substance use disease is treatable," Amity San Diego stands as a beacon of hope for individuals and families affected by dual diagnosis conditions.

About Amity San Diego

Amity San Diego (<https://amitysd.com>) is a leading addiction treatment center specializing in dual diagnosis care for individuals with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. Part of the Amity Behavioral Health Network, the facility offers Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) in a coastal San Diego setting. Amity San Diego is committed to providing evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally competent care that treats the whole person, not just the addiction.

About Amity Behavioral Health Network

Amity Behavioral Health Network operates multiple addiction treatment facilities across

California and Florida, with locations in San Diego, Huntington Beach, and Palm Beach. Founded by individuals with personal recovery experience, Amity is committed to providing world-class addiction care that combines clinical excellence with genuine compassion and understanding.

For More Information:

To learn more about dual diagnosis treatment at Amity San Diego or to schedule a free consultation, visit <https://amitysd.com> or call [phone number]. Admissions support is available seven days a week.

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